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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 55 of Security Council resolution [2556 \(2020\)](#), covers developments in the Democratic Republic of the Congo from 18 September to 30 November 2021. It provides a description of progress made in the implementation of the mandate of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) since the previous report, of 17 September 2021 ([S/2021/807](#)). It provides an overview of political developments, as well as information on the Mission's pursuit of a comprehensive approach to the protection of civilians, the stabilization and strengthening of State institutions and key governance and security reforms.

II. Political developments

2. Debates on the state of siege in North Kivu and Ituri, as well as the appointment of members of the Independent National Electoral Commission, dominated the reporting period.

3. On 29 September, the National Assembly adopted a report assessing the state of siege, which was prepared by the Defence and Security Standing Committee following hearings involving members of government. The report included the identification of allegations of embezzlement of funds for military operations, as well as recommendations for the development of an exit strategy for the state of siege for presentation to Parliament, for improvements in the working conditions of military and police forces and for the prosecution of members of the security forces collaborating with armed groups. The twelfth extension of the state of siege was adopted by the National Assembly and the Senate on 17 and 18 November, respectively. Deputies from North Kivu and Ituri did not participate in the National Assembly plenary sessions on 17 November or the previous one, on 1 November, in which the eleventh extension was passed, having demanded an exit strategy from the state of siege and having voiced their opposition to its continued extension.

4. On 16 October, the National Assembly endorsed the appointment of 12 members of the Independent National Electoral Commission, including Denis Kadima as President. Three posts remained vacant because the opposition refused to transmit its



list of nominees to protest the endorsement of Mr. Kadima. His candidacy was supported by six of the eight religious denominations entrusted with identifying the President, but opposed by the Catholic and Protestant Churches. On 18 October, the group Agir en groupe organisé en vue des résultats pour l'avenir (AGORA) called for the consideration of women as candidates for the Commission, including as President, to achieve a peaceful and cohesive process and to fulfil the provisions of the Constitution, the Commission's organic law and the provisions of the Government's programme of action on parity, fair representation and the meaningful participation of women in public affairs. On 22 October, the President, Félix Antoine Tshilombo Tshisekedi, appointed the members endorsed by the National Assembly, four of whom were women, including two serving in the posts of Rapporteur and Deputy Quaestor. Mr. Tshisekedi called upon the opposition to identify nominees for the three vacant posts and announced the upcoming appointment of a public official situated in his office who would be responsible for monitoring and ensuring a smooth electoral process.

5. The Catholic and Protestant Churches, the opposition, comprising Lamuka and the Front commun pour le Congo, and part of the majority denounced the process, resulting in the nomination of the Independent National Electoral Commission members. On 24 October, they and other actors formed a coalition, called the "bloc patriotique", with the stated goal of advocating credible, free, transparent, inclusive and peaceful elections in 2023. MONUSCO engaged with key political and civil society actors, including the newly appointed President of the Commission, to promote credible, transparent, inclusive and peaceful political processes with the full, equal and meaningful participation of women, noting that the upcoming revision of the electoral law may offer an opportunity to advance the common objectives.

6. Concerns mounted over hate speech, disinformation campaigns and related tensions, in particular in Haut-Katanga and the eastern provinces. Between September and October, MONUSCO documented 29 instances of alleged hate speech in the country, which were often enabled by disinformation and took place in the context of armed conflicts and land disputes and targeting groups mainly on the basis of their ethnicity. The Mission, as well as the Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations during his visit to the country in October, engaged with the Head of State, the Government and Parliament on addressing hate speech. During the Council of Ministers meeting held on 22 October, Mr. Tshisekedi instructed the Government and the National Intelligence Agency to identify and open judicial proceedings against alleged perpetrators.

7. The September ordinary sessions of the National Assembly and the Senate were focused on budgetary matters. The draft 2022 finance law indicates a balanced budget amounting to \$10.2 billion, compared with \$7.2 billion in 2021. During a review mission in October 2021 in the framework of the \$1.5 billion International Monetary Fund (IMF) programme under the extended credit facility arrangement, the Congolese authorities and an IMF team reached a staff-level agreement that would permit IMF management to consider approval of a disbursement of a second tranche of funding by December 2021. Despite the persistence of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, the economy continued to recover, supported by increased mining production and a rebound in non-extractive growth.

8. Relations between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and its neighbours continued to evolve positively, including through the strengthening of economic and trade relations. From 27 to 29 October, Angola and the Democratic Republic of the Congo held the tenth session of their bilateral joint commission and signed two trade agreements.

9. On 26 October, the Special Representative met the President of Uganda, Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, in Entebbe at the invitation of Mr. Museveni to discuss the security situation in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, MONUSCO mandate implementation in cooperation with the Congolese authorities and the need to strengthen the use of regional tools to promote peace and stability in the country and the region.

III. Security situation

A. Ituri Province

10. Insecurity persisted owing to armed group activity, marked by high numbers of civilians killed, injured and displaced. Between 18 September and 15 November, 205 civilians, including at least 17 women and 10 children, were killed, and 78 civilians, including at least 4 women and 6 children, were injured. In early October, an estimated 1.7 million internally displaced persons were present in Ituri, similar to the previous reporting period. Although the epicentre of violence continued to be Djugu territory, more attacks were recorded in Irumu territory.

11. In Djugu, Coopérative pour le développement du Congo (CODECO) factions continued to target civilians and the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (FARDC). Between 18 September and 4 November, CODECO factions killed 23 civilians, including at least 4 women and 2 boys, and injured 33 other civilians, including at least 1 woman. They also caused significant displacement of civilians. In addition, renewed attacks by CODECO factions were recorded in Mahagi territory in October.

12. In Irumu territory, Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) attacks continued, constituting the most significant threat to civilians on both sides of the border between Ituri and North Kivu Provinces. During the reporting period, ADF significantly expanded its presence and capacity in the territory, moving northwards from Tshabi to perpetrate attacks in Komanda on 23 September and 1 October. It also attacked Makayanga on 26 September, as well as Ngombe-Niama on 4 October, displacing civilians from the Komanda area. In addition, ADF intensified operations in southern Mambasa territory, attacking civilians in Makumo and Biakato. Between 18 September and 15 November, in Irumu and Mambasa territories, ADF killed 91 civilians, including at least 8 women and 3 children, injured 19 civilians and abducted 79 other civilians, including at least 4 women and 19 children.

13. Further incidents in Irumu territory were recorded, involving the Force de résistance patriotique de l'Ituri (FRPI) and the Front patriotique et intégrationniste du Congo (FPIC). Between 18 September and 15 November, 11 civilians, including 1 woman, were killed, 4 were injured, including 2 children, and 5 civilian men were abducted.

B. North Kivu Province

14. In the Grand Nord area, the security situation remained volatile notwithstanding joint FARDC-MONUSCO offensive operations launched against ADF in August. While the operations inflicted significant losses on ADF and dismantled several of its strongholds, the group retained its capacity to harm civilians. ADF splintered into small groups while it retained its command and control capabilities, expanded its area of operations and intensified its reliance on improvised explosive devices. In Beni territory, the group carried out reprisal attacks against civilians in the south-eastern (Rwenzori sector) and northern parts of the territory (Watalinga *chefferie* and Beni-

Mbau sector, bordering Ituri). Seventeen incidents involving improvised explosive devices were reported between 26 September and 16 November. On multiple occasions, MONUSCO detected unidentified uncrewed aerial vehicles flying along the border between North Kivu and Ituri, including over MONUSCO bases. To respond to those threats, MONUSCO and FARDC exchanged information through the Centre de coordination des opérations, which was established on 13 October following MONUSCO good offices to enhance cooperation on joint operations and the protection of civilians. In addition, MONUSCO issued internal guidance on increased protective measures for the protection of civilians and the safety and security of peacekeepers.

15. In the Petit Nord area, clashes between FARDC and armed groups continued to threaten civilians. Forces patriotiques populaires-armée du peuple and the Bwira faction of Nduma défense du Congo-Rénové (NDC-R) continued to fight on the side of FARDC against opposing groups, committing human rights abuses. Armed groups, in particular Alliance des patriotes pour un Congo libre et souverain (APCLS), Collectif des mouvements pour le changement/Forces de défense du peuple, Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR) and the Guidon faction of NDC-R, targeted civilians. Between 18 September and 15 November, 35 civilians were killed, including at least 5 women and 4 children, and 37 were injured, including at least 11 women and 5 children. Between 7 and 8 November, at night, armed individuals attacked two FARDC positions in Rutshuru territory, triggering population displacement, mainly towards Uganda. FARDC launched a counteroffensive that re-established control of its positions. MONUSCO deployed two quick reaction forces to protect civilians. No civilian casualties were recorded, and the population returned progressively. FARDC issued a press statement on 8 November indicating that elements of the Mouvement du 23 mars (M23) had launched the attack from Rwanda, while the Rwandan Defence Force and M23 issued statements denying involvement.

C. South Kivu and Maniema Provinces

16. Security conditions deteriorated severely in the northern part of South Kivu, around Shabunda town and along the border with Maniema Province. As illegal mining intensified, Mai-Mai Raia Mutomboki groups moved into the area and perpetrated attacks against civilians. Attacks in Lulingu in early October triggered the displacement of approximately 1,500 households from 22 villages in the Nduma and Matamba areas. A counteroffensive launched by FARDC against two Mai-Mai Raia Mutomboki groups dispersed internally displaced persons across 16 villages.

17. Violence against civilians continued in the southern part of South Kivu, in the Hauts Plateaux and Moyens Plateaux of Uvira, Mwenga and Fizi territories. Attacks by Mai-Mai elements on Birindiro, which was the last remaining inhabited hamlet in the Marungu area, displaced its population, which sought protection from MONUSCO and received humanitarian assistance at Kahololo. Between 13 and 16 October, several villages in the Bibokoboko area of Fizi territory were ransacked and burned, displacing some 10,000 people towards Baraka, Lusenda and other villages. MONUSCO dispatched a standing combat deployment in support of FARDC, while humanitarian actors provided assistance to the displaced persons. Between 2 and 3 November, at night, unidentified armed individuals attacked multiple FARDC and Congolese National Police positions in Bukavu. FARDC, the Congolese National Police and MONUSCO immediately responded to the incident, in which two FARDC personnel and one member of the Congolese National Police, as well as six assailants, were killed. Thirty-six individuals were detained in connection with investigations into the incidents.

D. Tanganyika Province

18. The security situation continued to improve in Tanganyika Province, although Mai-Mai activity persisted in Nyunzu territory and the Bendera area. Between 18 September and 15 November, 30 incidents were recorded, involving the killing of 9 civilians and the injuring of a further 21, including at least 4 women. In a military operation conducted by FARDC against Mai-Mai Apa Na Pale on 3 October, 11 soldiers were killed and 15 were injured.

IV. Human rights situation

19. Between September and October, MONUSCO documented 1,024 human rights violations and abuses, similar to the previous reporting period. Ninety-three per cent of documented violations were committed in conflict-affected provinces, in particular Masisi, Beni and Rutshuru territories in North Kivu; Irumu, Djugu and Mambasa territories in Ituri; and Shabunda territory in South Kivu.

20. Armed groups in North Kivu and Ituri, in particular Nyatura, FDLR, ADF, CODECO, APCLS and NDC-R, intensified attacks against civilians notwithstanding the state of siege. The groups were responsible for 49 per cent of documented violations, resulting in the death of at least 153 men, 35 women and 3 children. State agents were responsible for 32 per cent of documented violations, in particular violations of the right to liberty and security of the person, with 184 victims (149 men, 28 women and 7 children), and the right to physical integrity, with 107 victims (56 men, 40 women and 11 children). The majority of violations continued to be committed in Ituri and North Kivu notwithstanding the state of siege. At least 252 people, including 46 women and 3 children, were victims of documented extrajudicial and summary killings, which is 32 per cent lower than in the previous report. State agents were responsible for the extrajudicial killing of 15 men and 3 women, while armed groups were responsible for the summary execution of 188 men, 43 women and 3 children.

21. Documented violations related to democratic space increased by 131 per cent owing to increased threats against members of civil society organizations and violations of the right to peaceful assembly. In September and October, members of armed groups and State agents threatened 10 journalists who were carrying out their work.

22. Security and detention conditions in detention facilities remained dire owing to severe overpopulation, among other reasons. As at 26 October, the 11 priority detention facilities monitored and supported by MONUSCO held 22,820 inmates, including 14,483 high-risk prisoners, 518 women prisoners, 508 boys and 10 girls, far exceeding their holding capacity of 7,070 inmates. Seventy-five per cent of those inmates are in pretrial detention. MONUSCO documented a 20 per cent increase in detainees in pretrial detention in Ituri and North Kivu Provinces compared with the quarter before the state of siege.

23. Congolese authorities continued to combat impunity and to prosecute, with the support of MONUSCO, those accused of war crimes, crimes against humanity and other serious human rights violations. Since September, 5 Congolese National Police and 16 FARDC personnel have been convicted of serious human rights violations. Two FDLR combatants were convicted of the war crimes of murder, rape, looting, torture and inhuman and degrading treatment. During the reporting period, MONUSCO supported four joint investigation missions with military prosecutors into serious human rights violations and one mobile court in conflict-affected areas. The military court of South Kivu convicted Chance Mihonya Kolokolo, a leader of Mai-

Mai Raia Mutomboki, following a mobile court hearing organized in Irambi-Katana, South Kivu, from 13 to 21 September. He was sentenced to life in prison for crimes against humanity, including arbitrary detention, indiscriminate attacks against civilians, rape and the use of child labour. It was the first trial in South Kivu involving the charges of the recruitment and use of children and the illegal exploitation of natural resources.

V. Humanitarian situation

24. The humanitarian situation continued to worsen owing to insecurity and epidemics, in addition to limited access to basic services, in particular in the eastern part of the country. Ituri, North Kivu and South Kivu Provinces registered new waves of displacement in September and October owing to ongoing insecurity. The number of internally displaced persons in the country surpassed 5.7 million, of whom 51 per cent were women, after 1.7 million were newly displaced and 583,997 returned during 2021. The figure represents the greatest number of internally displaced persons on the African continent.

25. COVID-19 continued to strain the economy and the health system. As at 10 November, in a context of limited testing capacity and vaccine uptake, the Democratic Republic of the Congo had recorded 57,747 COVID-19 cases, 63 per cent of whom were men, including 1,099 related deaths, 67 per cent of which were of men. Logistical challenges continued to hamper vaccine provision and access for people living in remote and conflict-affected areas. The meningitis outbreak continued in Tshopo, where 204 people had died as at 9 November, including 51 women and girls. Endemic diseases, including malaria, cholera and measles, negatively affected vulnerable populations.

26. In October, a new Ebola virus disease outbreak occurred in North Kivu, adding to the complexity of the humanitarian situation in the highly volatile northern part of the province. As at 9 November, 11 cases, affecting 7 women and 4 men and resulting in 9 deaths, had been registered. Building on the lessons learned from previous responses, humanitarian partners rapidly mobilized to support the Ministry of Health in preventing the further spread of the disease. Preliminary sequencing indicated that the outbreak, the thirteenth, was likely linked to the tenth outbreak, which occurred from 2018 to 2020, underscoring the importance of surveillance, survivor assistance and rapid response to disease resurgence.

27. In October, the independent commission on sexual exploitation and abuse of the World Health Organization released an investigative report, which included an examination of how its system had failed to prevent or detect widespread instances of sexual exploitation and abuse. The report included the recommendations to take note of the failures and to exact stronger measures to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse, drawing heavily on the activities and lessons learned from the wider United Nations system over the past five years. Moreover, the Government appointed a focal point for the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse to help to ensure that prevention measures are integrated into the multisectoral response in the context of the current outbreak of Ebola virus disease.

28. Between January and October, 215 security incidents directly affected humanitarian personnel or assets, and five humanitarian workers were killed. The security situation hindered assistance delivery, often delaying relief operations because humanitarian actors had to reduce movements or suspend activities in some instances.

29. As at 9 November, the \$1.98 billion humanitarian response plan for the Democratic Republic of the Congo was only 34 per cent funded.

VI. Protection of civilians

A. Mission strategies and political processes

30. MONUSCO continued to strengthen the coordination of its protection efforts across provinces. The Mission focused on defining joint responses to localized threats to civilians in the Hauts Plateaux of South Kivu and in Nyunzu territory of Tanganyika and on the protection of internally displaced persons seeking refuge near MONUSCO bases. Along with Kinshasa-based telecommunications companies, The Mission advocated improved network coverage in hotspots in North Kivu, South Kivu, Ituri and Tanganyika to enable quicker response to early warning alerts.

31. The Mission, as well as the Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations during his October visit, engaged with Mr. Tshisekedi, the Government, Parliament, FARDC, the Congolese National Police and civil society to improve the protection of civilians, collaboration with FARDC in compliance with the human rights due diligence policy and humanitarian access by curbing incidents targeting humanitarian personnel and improving the supply chain for assistance. In mid-November, the Government deployed, with MONUSCO support, 750 police officers across Ituri, North Kivu and South Kivu Provinces. From September to November, MONUSCO responded to at least 88 clearance requests for support from FARDC, including 66 for transport of members of the national defence and security forces on MONUSCO assets, 6 for support to military operations and 16 for logistical support and supplies.

B. Field-level responses

32. The Mission's community alert network system received a monthly average of 341 alerts, 42 per cent of which originated in South Kivu and 41 per cent of which originated in North Kivu. State security forces and/or MONUSCO responded to 56 per cent of the alerts. The Mission continued to invest in community engagement by holding capacity-building sessions on protection of civilians tools, early warning mechanisms and conflict resolution for local protection actors throughout Ituri, North Kivu, South Kivu and Tanganyika. On 1 October, during a workshop organized in Bunia by the Vice-Governor of Ituri, MONUSCO trained 72 protection actors, including 31 women from the Union congolaise des femmes des médias and the Groupe d'alerte précoce, whose members were from 25 *chefferies* and *groupements* in Djugu and Irumu territories.

33. In Ituri, North Kivu, South Kivu and Tanganyika, MONUSCO, through the Mine Action Service, conducted 156 spot tasks between 18 September and 16 November, resulting in the destruction of 185 explosive remnants of war and 629 rounds of small arms ammunition. In addition, MONUSCO, through the Service, destroyed and disposed of 258 other devices, including in response to requests from FARDC. Fifteen risk-awareness sessions on explosive devices and remnants of war were conducted in Beni and Bunia for United Nations military and civilian personnel and non-governmental organization personnel. In addition, Radio Okapi broadcast programmes in Swahili, French and Kinande to raise the awareness of local populations in the Grand Nord area. MONUSCO, through the Service, provided in-mission training on explosive hazard assessment and improvised explosive device threat mitigation in the context of jungle warfare training for relevant military personnel.

34. In Ituri, MONUSCO deployed a temporary operating base in Jina and in Djugu on 23 October to facilitate the movement of civilians along the Bunia-Mahagi axis, which connects the Democratic Republic of the Congo to Uganda, and to respond to threats by CODECO factions. Following reports that State security forces were allegedly involved in protecting illicit gold mining sites, MONUSCO advocated, with the provincial military and civilian authorities, addressing illicit mining and upholding the responsibility of State security forces to protect civilians.

35. To mitigate the threat posed by ADF in southern Irumu, MONUSCO and FARDC continued to escort civilian convoys travelling on route nationale 4. From 18 September to 11 November, 1,344 civilian vehicles were safely escorted. On 8 October, MONUSCO launched a project to rehabilitate segments of the road to facilitate passage and render it more secure.

36. In South Kivu, in the Hauts Plateaux, humanitarian actors mobilized food assistance for displaced persons in Kahololo, delivered with MONUSCO logistical support. As a result of the Mission's advocacy, FARDC increased deployments around Kahololo, where MONUSCO has maintained a standing combat deployment since 29 April. On 28 October, MONUSCO dispatched a standing combat deployment in response to renewed attacks by Mai-Mai coalitions around Bibokoboko in order to deter armed groups, support FARDC and facilitate the return of displaced persons. MONUSCO provided security to 4,200 internally displaced persons located in and around Baraka and temporarily supplied food, water and medical care ahead of the arrival of humanitarian assistance.

37. On 13 September, MONUSCO established a standing combat deployment in Kabeya-Mayj, in northern Nyunzu territory, Tanganyika Province, as part of the Mission's efforts to engage proactively with communities with a view to defusing intercommunal tensions, promoting social cohesion and enhancing local protection capacities. The standing combat deployment was withdrawn on 9 November after having contributed to improved security in the area. In the Bendera area, MONUSCO conducted 33 long-range patrols between 18 September and 18 November, which resulted in the surrender of 31 men combatants. A total of 12 children, including 6 girls, were separated from armed groups in Djuma Kajundo and Lugogo village during the operations.

VII. Stabilization and the strengthening of State institutions

A. Stabilization and root causes of conflict

38. The implementation of projects under the International Security and Stabilization Support Strategy, funded by the Stabilization Coherence Fund, continued. Activities addressed key conflict drivers in Djugu territory of Ituri Province by supporting the restoration of State authority, addressing land disputes, supporting economic recovery and strengthening the management of natural resources, in line with the transition plan benchmarks.

39. The Congolese authorities and MONUSCO inaugurated a police station in Kpandroma on 16 October, built under the project Ensemble pour la sécurité et la paix à Djugu. The Congolese authorities deployed 25 police officers, including 5 women, who had received training from MONUSCO on impunity, human rights violations and gender-based violence.

40. The one-year project Pamoja kwa Djugu was completed on 31 October and resulted in the development of a road map for peace in Djugu territory, drafted by customary and civilian authorities and women's and youth associations during a five-

day workshop held from 18 to 22 October. A follow-up committee comprising local leaders, civil society actors and MONUSCO was established under the leadership of the Djugu Territory Administrator and the provincial Disarmament, Demobilization, Community Reintegration and Stabilization programme interim coordination team. The road map was the culmination of 90 intercommunal dialogues that brought together local authorities and youth and women's associations to identify and address the root causes of intercommunal conflicts, mainly related to land.

41. The implementation of the project Ensemble pour un Djugu pacifique continued to foster social cohesion and economic recovery activities for vulnerable women and at-risk young people in Djugu, thus reducing the risk of recruitment by armed groups. During the reporting period, eight agricultural cooperatives were established, and eight short-term projects were initiated to rebuild critical local infrastructure, employing 900 people, including 500 young people and 300 women, who also benefited from vocational training offered through the project.

B. Security sector and justice system reforms

42. On 26 November, MONUSCO, in collaboration with the National Commission for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons and the Reduction of Armed Violence, initiated an awareness-raising programme on small arms and light weapons, targeting women in State and non-State institutions in Bunia, Goma and Bukavu. Earlier, on 22 September, MONUSCO organized a meeting of international partners supporting the National Commission to enhance delivery of external assistance in small arms and light weapons control.

43. MONUSCO provided strategic and technical support to the Minister of Defence to prepare an upcoming ministerial leadership workshop on ethics for FARDC senior leadership and a planned evaluation of the Army Reform Plan. While MONUSCO and the United Nations Development Programme continued to develop the joint programme in support of police reforms, MONUSCO partnered with the Congolese National Police on a capacity-building project to improve professional handling of crime scenes.

44. The implementation of the Joint Justice Reform Support Programme continued to improve the delivery and accountability of justice and corrections institutions at the national and provincial levels. In September, inspections of judicial and penitentiary institutions were carried out across Tanganyika, which served to identify and redress irregularities and to reinforce institutional capacities. In October, the Programme supported the regional court of Tshimbulu, in Kasai Central, in conducting trials in Luiza relating to at least 70 cases of serious crimes, including murder and the rape of minors. Most of the accused had been in prison for several years. Now that the Programme is fully funded, discussions on extending it to South Kivu and Ituri are continuing.

45. As part of the Mission's efforts to strengthen justice mechanisms, MONUSCO handed over three buildings to State authorities, including the juvenile court in Goma, on 27 September, the Bunia prison courtroom, on 4 October, and the magistrates' court in Tshikapa, on 13 October.

C. Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration

46. MONUSCO worked closely with State authorities to advance the operationalization of the Disarmament, Demobilization, Community Reintegration and Stabilization programme, promulgated on 5 July. The Mission engaged with the

National Coordinator of the programme and discussed its operationalization. An internal United Nations support strategy was developed to guide the Mission's approach, and a joint technical working group with the United Nations country team was established to coordinate its implementation. On 13 October, an inaugural workshop between the technical working group and Government counterparts led to the formation of two joint thematic working groups, one on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and another on community reintegration, recovery and stabilization, to further drive the operationalization of the programme. On 21 October, MONUSCO held an informational session with donors and international stakeholders to inform them of the United Nations engagement in support of the programme.

47. MONUSCO supported the National Coordinator of the Disarmament, Demobilization, Community Reintegration and Stabilization programme in his efforts to operationalize the programme at the provincial and local levels, including by facilitating field assessment missions and engaging with civil society organizations and other stakeholders. In October, the National Coordinator designated interim programme provincial coordination teams in Ituri, North Kivu and South Kivu. MONUSCO and provincial authorities initiated planning for a pilot project in Tanganyika, in the context of the Mission's withdrawal from the province, to address the residual armed groups active in the areas bordering South Kivu and Maniema.

48. MONUSCO continued to support the voluntary disengagement of armed group elements. Between 18 September and 17 November, the Mission disarmed, provided reintegration support to and returned 98 Congolese former combatants, including 3 women, to their communities of origin. As part of the Mission's disarmament, demobilization, repatriation, reintegration and resettlement efforts, six male Rwandan former combatants with three dependents, including two women, were hosted at transit centres. One Rwandan former combatant was repatriated, one Burundian former combatant was reunited with his family in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and two Burundian former combatants were transferred to Burundi.

VIII. Women and peace and security

49. MONUSCO continued to support Congolese efforts to increase women's meaningful participation in political processes and public affairs. The Mission engaged with the leaders of the main political platforms in the country on seizing the upcoming opportunity to revise the electoral law to promote the inclusion of women in political parties' lists. In parallel to MONUSCO engagement to promote the meaningful participation of women in political and electoral processes, a member of AGORA and Member of Parliament, Didier Kamundu (of G7, Ensemble pour la République and Union sacrée de la nation), launched an advocacy campaign to endorse women candidates as Independent National Electoral Commission members, including for the position of President of the Independent National Electoral Commission. On 20 October, the Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations met with members of the national civil society consultation framework and the African Women Leaders Network in Kinshasa. He reiterated the readiness of the United Nations to support women's meaningful participation in the upcoming electoral process.

50. On 29 October, the Special Representative met with 15 women leaders from North Kivu and Ituri to discuss women's rights, insecurity and access to justice in the context of the state of siege. They also discussed strengthening gender perspectives and women's meaningful participation in decisions concerning the Mission's activities and the protection of civilians.

51. MONUSCO promoted the inclusion of women's security concerns in local security plans and security governance processes, conducted and supported capacity-building activities and systematized gender integration and the prevention of gender-based violence. On 2 November, 30 women leaders engaged with local authorities and Congolese National Police and FARDC officers (12 women and 18 men) from Rutshuru territory to enhance women's participation in conflict resolution and peace processes. Consequently, participants committed themselves to involving women in local security committees to ensure their meaningful participation in creating an environment conducive to the protection of civilians. MONUSCO engaged with 44 civil society actors (41 women and 3 men) in Butembo and Lubero from 25 to 30 October on women's leadership and meaningful participation in peacebuilding and decision-making to enhance women's roles in community alert networks and local protection committees.

IX. Child protection and sexual violence in conflict

52. Between 18 September and 15 November, MONUSCO verified 154 grave violations against children (57 girls and 96 boys), including 1 attack on a school. A total of 13 children (2 girls and 11 boys) were killed or maimed, including 3 children who were killed by FARDC and 3 who were killed or maimed by unexploded remnants of war.

53. A total of 84 cases of recruitment and use of children (23 girls and 61 boys) were verified after the children escaped or were separated from armed groups. Ten of the children were newly recruited during the reporting period. A total of 36 children (9 girls and 27 boys) were voluntarily released, including within the framework of MONUSCO-facilitated road maps to end and prevent child recruitment and use and other grave violations against children. Mai-Mai Biloze Bishambuke elements were the main perpetrators of child recruitment and use (3 girls and 15 boys), followed by APCLS (13 boys) and ADF (6 girls and 5 boys).

54. A Mai-Mai Raia Mutomboki leader operating in Shabunda territory, in South Kivu, signed a unilateral declaration and a road map to end and prevent child recruitment and use and other grave violations against children. A total of 41 armed groups have made such commitments since July 2018, resulting in the voluntary release of 2,444 children, including 356 girls.

55. MONUSCO continued to support accountability for human rights and humanitarian law violations, including conflict-related sexual violence. Congolese judicial authorities convicted 229 perpetrators (all men) of sexual violence, including 36 FARDC soldiers, 6 Congolese National Police officers, 54 armed group members and 133 civilians. MONUSCO and United Nations partners provided medical, psychosocial and legal assistance to 181 survivors, including 30 women, 145 girls, 5 men and 1 boy. In addition, MONUSCO trained 149 FARDC unit commanders and magistrates, including 10 high-ranking officers, on conflict-related sexual violence. Fifty-two officers signed a commitment to combating impunity for crimes related to sexual violence.

56. On 20 and 21 October, Mr. Tshisekedi, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict and MONUSCO participated in a round table on establishing a reparation fund for survivors of conflict-related sexual violence and other serious crimes. Organized under the auspices of the Denise Nyakeru Tshisekedi Foundation, the round table was also aimed at launching discussions, with the participation of survivors' networks, on the adoption of a national policy framework on reparations within the context of transitional justice.

X. Exit strategy

57. MONUSCO and the United Nations country team continued their engagement with the Government on the operationalization of the transition plan. The United Nations system, along with local and international stakeholders, including women's and youth groups, initiated a mapping of ongoing and planned activities covered by the transition plan's benchmarks and indicators to identify gaps and strengthen integrated action in support of the common objectives agreed with the Government and other national stakeholders.

58. MONUSCO and the United Nations country team, in collaboration with national and international stakeholders, continued to operationalize the humanitarian-development-peace triple nexus approach in Tanganyika and the Kasai region. In addition, the country team, along with MONUSCO, initiated a review of the common country analysis and the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework to reflect the transition plan for MONUSCO, the Disarmament, Demobilization, Community Reintegration and Stabilization programme and the triple nexus approach. The United Nations COVID-19 socioeconomic response plan for the country will be integrated into the Framework to enhance coherence.

59. In the Kasai region, the United Nations system continued its efforts to sustain peacebuilding gains following the withdrawal of MONUSCO. The Resident Coordinator Office engaged with the interim Governor of Kasai and provincial ministers to strengthen coordination between stakeholders involved in implementing the triple nexus approach. The World Bank carried out assessments in Kasai Central Province to identify potential synergies with the United Nations country team within the triple nexus approach. The first meeting of the Kasai Central provincial coordination mechanism for the approach was held on 13 October. During a subsequent field visit of the partners coordination group – comprising Member States, international financial institutions and the country team – to Kananga, Kasai Central Province, and Tshikapa, Kasai Province, from 27 to 29 October, stock was taken of seven implemented projects, and measures required to further the approach were identified.

60. A five-month community violence reduction project, aimed at resolving land disputes in Dibaya territory, in Kasai Central, was concluded on 29 September. Community leaders and State judiciary personnel were trained in land law and mediation techniques, while some 100 land mediation agreements were validated by the regional court of Tshimbulu.

61. In view of the MONUSCO withdrawal from Tanganyika by June 2022, from 29 September to 1 October, the Deputy Special Representative/Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator visited the province with United Nations country team representatives to reinforce the operationalization of the triple nexus approach. The Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations visited Tanganyika on 21 and 22 October to engage with provincial and local authorities and civil society on the stabilization of Nyunzu territory and the Bendera area. From 15 to 17 November, MONUSCO senior leadership, accompanied by United Nations country team representatives, conducted a follow-up mission to engage with provincial authorities and youth and women's representatives on improving security, ensuring the integration of United Nations system efforts and maintaining Radio Okapi's presence and coverage following the Mission's withdrawal. The United Nations Development Programme committed itself to establishing an office in Tanganyika to oversee the implementation of projects on justice reform, policing and good governance.

XI. Mission effectiveness

A. Mission performance

1. Assessment of the performance of the force and police components

62. The MONUSCO force helped FARDC to repel attacks by CODECO in Ituri Province, to conduct offensive operations against ADF and other armed groups, to protect civilians from retaliatory attacks and to prevent ADF movement towards Butembo, in North Kivu Province. It also helped to deter armed groups and to secure humanitarian access in remote areas of South Kivu and Tanganyika. To that end, and to enact the commitment to enhancing capabilities in line with the Action for Peacekeeping initiative, from 18 September to 16 November, the force conducted 13,735 day and night patrols, 1,776 joint patrols, 1,080 escorts and 237 aerial reconnaissance operations, and it launched 24 standing combat deployments.

63. From 18 September to 16 November, 11 out of 40 military units were inspected, with the overall performance of all units assessed as satisfactory. Shortfalls assessed as minor were identified in equipment unserviceability, base defence, night vision capability, buddy first aid, self-sustainment, accommodation and living conditions, ground-to-air communication, welfare and riot control equipment. The military component is addressing the issues with unit focal points through performance improvement plans and further operational preparedness inspection visits by senior military leadership, while recommendations for improvement have been provided to respective troop-contributing countries.

64. Women currently represent 20 per cent of military staff officers and military observers and 5.1 per cent of military contingent members. MONUSCO now has 13 female and mixed engagement teams because one team withdrew from Kalemie in the context of the Mission's transition. Female and mixed engagement teams have carried out 35 long-range patrols and foot patrols to address security and protection needs in a gender-sensitive manner in Ituri, North Kivu and South Kivu.

65. As part of the ongoing enhancement of the MONUSCO Intervention Brigade, the advance party of the third quick reaction force, from Nepal, deployed on 26 October, with the remainder of the unit scheduled to deploy in December 2021 and to be fully operational in January 2022. The deployment of the last quick reaction force, from South Africa, is now envisaged for the first quarter of 2022.

66. The Mission's police component conducted a quarterly performance evaluation of 375 individual police officers, including 112 women. Evaluation criteria included: professionalism; commitment to addressing protection challenges; capacity to identify security threats and gather and analyse information; and productivity. The overall performance assessment score was 68 per cent, which represents a 4.9 per cent decrease in performance since the previous reporting period. The decrease is largely attributable to the fact that 78 officers were newly deployed individual police officers being evaluated for the first time. To address the decrease, the police component organized 12 online in-mission training sessions for 289 individual police officers, including the 78 newly deployed ones, on child protection, gender, human rights and protection of civilians. The Mission also finalized a new directive on the training of individual police officers that will include induction courses on the local context and actions to support the reform of the Congolese National Police.

67. As in the previous reporting period, women represented 17 per cent of formed police unit personnel. MONUSCO continued to promote gender-responsive policing, including by raising the awareness of contingent commanders and, where applicable, advocacy with the diplomatic representations of police-contributing countries. On

9 November, Superintendent Malla Sangya, a MONUSCO individual police officer, received the eleventh United Nations Woman Police Officer of the Year award for her outstanding contributions to crisis management, environmental protection and the welfare of police personnel during the COVID-19 pandemic.

68. Two formed police units out of the eight currently deployed in MONUSCO were assessed during the reporting period and deemed satisfactory on the basis of criteria such as support to mandate implementation, command and control, training, discipline, sustainable logistical capacity and medical support. The units updated their contingency plans and received 394 training sessions on protection of civilians, public order management, firearms, command and control and camp security. In addition, 13 operational readiness inspections were carried out for formed police units, which were all deemed operational and ready to respond to security threats.

2. Progress in the implementation of the Comprehensive Planning and Performance Assessment System

69. During a three-day workshop held in early November, MONUSCO identified outputs for the results framework of the Comprehensive Planning and Performance Assessment System, as well as indicators that will allow the Mission to leverage the System to assess progress against transition plan benchmarks. MONUSCO entered the second phase of implementation of the System with the uploading of the results framework to the System's global platform and the populating of dashboards with data gathered against System performance indicators. The Mission advanced planning to begin System-based performance assessment and reporting during the first quarter of 2022.

3. Impact of the pandemic on mandate implementation

70. MONUSCO continued to implement measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19, including by applying a 14-day quarantine to newly deployed uniformed personnel, while prioritizing operational activities with a focus on protection of civilians.

71. As at 18 November, 1,118 United Nations personnel had tested positive for COVID-19, 1,056 of whom recovered, and the number of deaths remained unchanged, at 13. Also as at 18 November, through the United Nations vaccination campaign for United Nations personnel, their dependents and international non-governmental organization personnel in the country, 16,300 doses of the vaccine had been administered, 21 per cent of which was administered to civilians and 79 per cent of which was administered to uniformed personnel.

B. Serious misconduct, including sexual exploitation and abuse

72. From 1 September to 31 October, MONUSCO recorded two allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse, one involving a military contingent member and the other involving a government-provided personnel member. The allegations, which related to incidents in 2020 and 2021, were referred for investigation. Both alleged victims were referred to the United Nations Population Fund for support. In addition, two allegations of other types of serious misconduct, namely harassment and fraud, were recorded and referred to the Office of Internal Oversight Services.

73. From 31 October to 7 November, South Africa deployed a paternity and maintenance support team to MONUSCO. The team collected biological samples from victims of sexual exploitation and abuse committed by members of the South African National Defence Force, as well as from their children. That will enable a determination of the paternity of 18 children of victims of sexual exploitation and

abuse and will ultimately ensure child support and maintenance for the children, where appropriate.

74. MONUSCO continued to take preventive measures against sexual exploitation and abuse, including strict non-fraternization policies within uniformed components, risk assessments, enforcement of curfews and out-of-bounds areas, mandatory trainings of uniformed and civilian personnel and capacity-building and engagement with host communities on the United Nations zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse. In addition, Radio Okapi and community radio stations continued to support awareness-raising campaigns in local languages, aimed at preventing such exploitation and abuse.

75. Support to victims remained at the core of the Mission's action plan to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation and abuse, in line with Action for Peacekeeping commitments to enhance accountability. Following the completion of six capacity-building projects in August, financed under the trust fund in support of victims of sexual exploitation and abuse, MONUSCO, in consultation with partners, developed new projects to support victims for the trust fund board's consideration for 2022. The projects include empowering victims of sexual exploitation and abuse to generate incomes for themselves and for the care for their children.

XII. Safety and security of United Nations personnel

76. In line with the priorities of the Action for Peacekeeping initiative, the safety and security of United Nations personnel and facilities remained a priority. The activities of non-State armed groups continued to pose a risk to United Nations personnel in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, in particular North Kivu, South Kivu and Ituri. From 18 September to 10 November, 106 incidents against United Nations personnel and facilities were recorded, including 7 related to armed conflict, 42 to crime, 8 to civil unrest and 49 to hazards. Of the personnel affected, 86 were men (34 international staff and 52 national staff) and 13 were women (8 international staff and 5 national staff). Crime and hazards increased marginally since the previous reporting period, which may be attributable to the easing of national COVID-19-related restrictions and continued socioeconomic hardship.

77. The Mission carried out regular security assessments to identify risks, and it instituted mitigating measures, including the training of United Nations personnel. MONUSCO armed escorts provided security to United Nations personnel, enabling the implementation of the Mission mandate and the delivery of humanitarian assistance in the conflict-affected areas of the country.

78. The trial related to the assassination of United Nations experts Michael Sharp and Zaida Catalán, which had been adjourned since May owing to COVID-19-related restrictions, resumed before the military court of the former Kasai Occidental on 28 September. The Court questioned two journalists and one lawyer. The detention of the lawyer, notwithstanding his status as an informant, led to protest by the Congolese Bar Association and some lawyers on the case, resulting in the adjournment of hearings on 14 October. On 26 October, the Court requested unrepresented defendants to secure the services of other counsel to enable the trial to continue. The trial resumed on 23 November.

XIII. Observations

79. The transition plan represents a cornerstone of the joint efforts of the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the United Nations system

to move towards the long-term stabilization of the country. It offers a blueprint for the phased, conditions-based withdrawal of MONUSCO from the remaining areas of the Democratic Republic of the Congo where the Mission is still deployed. In line with its mandated priorities, the Mission, in close collaboration with the United Nations country team and key partners, is fully committed to working hand in hand with the Congolese authorities to operationalize the transition plan by accompanying the Government in addressing insecurity in the east through the maintenance of a robust posture against armed groups. In addition to military measures, progress in the resolution of intercommunal conflicts, the implementation of the Disarmament, Demobilization, Community Reintegration and Stabilization programme, a national strategy on security sector reform and the strengthening of the Congolese justice system's ability to combat impunity and ensure accountability for crimes against the civilian population remain essential to the creation of the conditions for the responsible withdrawal of MONUSCO. I welcome the Government's ownership of the transition process and look forward to its continued engagement in the collective efforts to ensure the plan's full implementation. I call upon all stakeholders to support the implementation of the Government's programme of action for 2021–2023, which remains the primary vehicle for achieving the common objectives set out in the transition plan.

80. I welcome the commitment of the Government to advance the operationalization of the Disarmament, Demobilization, Community Reintegration and Stabilization programme, as demonstrated by the appointment of interim provincial coordinators, ongoing plans for piloting the programme's approach in Tanganyika Province and engagement with the United Nations. I look forward to the rapid finalization of a comprehensive national strategy and policy framework that draws on local knowledge and capacities and sets out the basic parameters of the approach, in line with international disarmament, demobilization and reintegration standards, which will greatly facilitate the mobilization of international assistance for this critical endeavour.

81. I take note of the composition of the new leadership of the Independent National Electoral Commission and underscore the need for a timely, inclusive, transparent, credible and peaceful electoral process. I urge all stakeholders to seek consensual ways to defuse political tensions that risk undermining the country's security, stability and national cohesion in the run-up to the next elections. I encourage all actors to view the consensual revision of the electoral law as an opportunity to lower the political temperature as the country continues to face daunting challenges on the security, humanitarian and development fronts. I call upon stakeholders to preserve democratic space, to refrain from hate speech and any incitement to violence and to encourage full and free participation in the electoral process, including the meaningful participation of women and young people. In that context, the United Nations stands ready to provide electoral support to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, if requested, ahead of and during the 2023 polls.

82. I remain deeply concerned by the persistent insecurity in Ituri, North Kivu and South Kivu. I urge the national, provincial and local authorities to proactively engage in efforts to defuse intercommunal conflicts and carry out needed reforms that will reinforce State authority, protect civilians, in particular women and children, and contribute to the stabilization of those areas. With regard to the ongoing state of siege in North Kivu and Ituri, I renew my call for compliance with the international human rights and humanitarian law obligations of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I call upon the relevant authorities to act with restraint and transparency in implementing the emergency measure.

83. I remain deeply troubled by the persistent violations and abuses of human rights and international humanitarian law, including conflict-related sexual violence

committed by armed groups and State agents. The trial and conviction of Chance Mihonya Kolokolo is a positive development in efforts to combat impunity and the illegal exploitation of natural resources. Every effort must continue to be made to ensure accountability for human rights violations, abuses and crimes fuelling conflict, in particular war crimes and crimes against humanity. I take note of the round table on establishing a reparations fund for victims of conflict-related sexual violence and other serious crimes. I encourage the Government to implement its recommendations and heed survivors' voices as part of the road map for the national transitional justice initiative.

84. I strongly condemn the continuing attacks against humanitarian workers and peacekeepers. I call upon the Congolese authorities to ensure that perpetrators are brought swiftly to justice.

85. As have consistently maintained, I strongly condemn all instances of sexual exploitation and abuse occurring within United Nations operations and am committed to eradicating that behaviour from the Organization. In practice, that means that efforts have been focused on putting victims at the centre of programmatic efforts, working with Member States to end impunity, being open to expertise and learning from every quarter and tackling the root issues of gender inequality that give rise to exploitive cultures, as well as on continuous commitment to greater transparency and open communications. MONUSCO continues to implement a range of preventive and disciplinary policies as part of the overall programme. I welcome the release of the report of the independent commission of the World Health Organization and call for the swift implementation of its recommendations, and I also welcome the appointment of a government focal point on prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse.

86. I am encouraged by the unambiguous commitment of the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to continue to work with MONUSCO and the United Nations country team, as well as key regional and international partners, to consolidate hard-won stabilization gains and address the continuing challenges facing the country and its people, in particular in areas still affected by conflict and armed group violence. MONUSCO still has a critical role to play in addressing the continuing challenges highlighted in the present report and achieving the common objectives set out in the Government's programme of action and the joint transition plan. I therefore recommend that the Mission's mandate be extended for another year with its current strategic priorities and authorized troop and police strength.

87. Lastly, I wish to thank my Special Representative, Bintou Keita, for her steadfast leadership and dedication. I also wish to express my sincere gratitude to all MONUSCO personnel, members of the United Nations country team, troop- and police-contributing countries and the Office of my Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region for their continued commitment to peace and security in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

