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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 major developments in the Democratic Republic of the Congo from 19 March to 18 June 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 18 March 2021 ([S/2021/274](#)). It provides an overview of political developments, including the formation of the new Government and the adoption of its programme of action. It also offers information on the Mission's pursuit of a comprehensive approach to the protection of civilians, and on progress made in adjusting its priorities, posture and presence in accordance with the joint strategy on the progressive and phased drawdown of MONUSCO ([S/2020/1041](#)) and the Action for Peacekeeping initiative.

II. Political developments

2. The period under review was marked by the formation of the Union sacrée de la nation (USN) Government and the declaration of a state of siege in Ituri and North Kivu Provinces.

3. On 12 April 2021, the Prime Minister, Jean-Michel Sama Lukonde, announced the composition of his 57-member Government. Fifteen of the members, or 27 per cent, are women, compared with 17 per cent in the previous Government. On 15 April, around 130 national deputies threatened to block the investiture of the Government, alleging a geographical and political imbalance favouring the Union pour la démocratie et le progrès social. The President, Félix Tshisekedi, convened USN national deputies on 24 April and urged them to act swiftly to invest the Government.

4. On 26 April, the National Assembly endorsed the Prime Minister and his Government when 410 of the 412 deputies present voted in favour of the Government's programme of action for 2021–2023. Key actions covered by the programme of action include: the declaration of a state of emergency in conflict-affected eastern provinces; the establishment of a disarmament, demobilization, community reintegration and stabilization programme that precludes integration into



the army or the police; the implementation of security sector, justice and administrative reforms, as well as consensus-based constitutional reforms; and the holding of local and national elections in 2023. The programme of action amounts to around \$12 billion annually, compared with a State budget of \$7.1 billion for 2021.

5. On 11 June, Parliament adopted a bill to reform the Independent National Electoral Commission. The bill will be referred to the Constitutional Court for a ruling before its promulgation. The Plateforme des confessions religieuses de Centrafrique and Lamuka opposition leaders Martin Fayulu and Adolphe Muzito had reacted to amendments to the bill adopted in the Political, Administrative and Legal Standing Committee, with the Plateforme arguing that the bill instituted overrepresentation of political parties at the expense of civil society organizations and the Lamuka opposition leaders stressing the need to move away from political partisanship in the Commission.

6. On 3 May, the President signed two ordinances instituting a state of siege in Ituri and North Kivu Provinces, effective from 6 May for an initial period of 30 days, with the possibility of extension for 15-day periods. On 7 May, the Constitutional Court ruled that the ordinances were in line with the Constitution. On 3 and 4 June, respectively, the National Assembly and the Senate approved the first extension of the state of siege.

7. As an exceptional and temporary measure, the civilian authorities of Ituri and North Kivu have been replaced by a military governor and a police vice-governor during the state of siege. The provincial governments and assemblies have been suspended in both provinces, but provincial public servants continue to operate. The military and police authorities have been granted increased powers over arrests and searches; regulation of movement and freedom of expression and assembly; and enforcement of public order and decision-making. In addition, the military courts have taken over responsibility for criminal prosecutions from civilian courts. Importantly, certain fundamental rights and freedoms, including the right to life and freedom from torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, cannot be derogated from.

8. As part of her good offices, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Democratic Republic of the Congo engaged with the President, members of the Government and the military Governor and police Vice-Governor of North Kivu, stressing the importance of protecting and promoting human rights during the state of siege. She also underscored the need for close cooperation between MONUSCO and the defence and security forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in order to strengthen the protection of civilians in conflict-affected areas, in compliance with the human rights due diligence policy on United Nations support to non-United Nations security forces.

9. The President continued to engage with regional partners in his capacity as Chairperson of the African Union. From 4 to 6 April, he hosted negotiations between Egypt, Ethiopia and the Sudan on the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, followed by a visit to the Sudan, Egypt and Ethiopia in May. The President of Kenya, Uhuru Kenyatta, visited Kinshasa from 20 to 22 April to strengthen bilateral relations and reaffirm Kenyan support for the security and stability of the Democratic Republic of the Congo through the deployment of a quick reaction force within the MONUSCO Intervention Brigade.

10. From 3 to 6 May, MONUSCO participated in a workshop in Goma organized by the guarantors of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region, with the support of the National Oversight Mechanism and the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region. The aim was to put into operation the Contact and Coordination Group

mandated to oversee the technical implementation of non-military measures for the eradication of foreign armed groups in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region. Experts from Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania agreed on an action plan to encourage foreign armed groups to participate in voluntary disarmament and to improve disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes.

11. On 28 May, the International Monetary Fund announced a staff-level agreement with the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo on a three-year, \$1.5 billion programme under the extended credit facility arrangement. The aim of the programme is to assist the country in its recovery from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic while preserving its macroeconomic stability and encouraging reforms that will boost and sustain inclusive growth.

III. Security situation

A. Ituri Province

12. The security situation has deteriorated owing to increased armed group activity, particularly in Djugu and Irumu territories. Between 19 March and 10 May, 159 civilians, including 31 women and 15 children, were killed, and 52 civilians, including 8 women, were injured in incidents involving armed groups.

13. In Djugu territory, the intensity of the attacks by the Coopérative pour le développement du Congo (CODECO) on the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (FARDC) was even greater than in the period leading up to the cessation of hostilities in 2020. Between 10 and 17 April, 23 attacks against FARDC and civilians were recorded in eastern Djugu, in which 35 civilians were killed, including 7 women and 4 children. In some cases, these attacks prompted retaliation from the armed group Zaire. Since 10 April, MONUSCO has repelled armed group incursions in N'Bassa, Nyekese/Dhele, Yikpa, Schubert, Kasigbana and Kaa villages. The violence has triggered the displacement of civilians, with an estimated 5,000 internally displaced persons seeking protection near the MONUSCO temporary operating base in Fataki.

14. In Irumu territory, between 19 March and 16 June, Front patriotique et intégrationniste du Congo (FPIC), Force de résistance patriotique de l'Ituri (FRPI) and Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) assailants killed 70 civilians, including 17 women and 8 children, near the border with North Kivu. Between 18 April and 2 May, FARDC and FPIC elements clashed in Marabo and Niakunde, while FPIC attacked Nyara on 20 April, killing 10 civilians, including 6 children. These incidents triggered population displacement along the Bunia-Komanda road, where MONUSCO increased its patrols. On 31 May, attacks by unknown assailants in Tshabi and Boga resulted in the deaths of at least 56 civilians, including 30 internally displaced persons, injuries to at least 14 civilians, including 1 girl, and the abduction of at least 10 civilians. In addition, FRPI elements continued to loot local communities, undermining stabilization efforts in Irumu.

B. North Kivu Province

15. The overall security situation in North Kivu deteriorated amid increased armed group activity, fuelling demonstrations by citizens' movements and pressure groups against the local authorities, humanitarian actors and the United Nations for the

perceived inadequacy of their response. These developments hindered protection activities and heightened intercommunal tensions.

16. In the Grand Nord area, despite ongoing FARDC operations, ADF continued to carry out attacks in Beni territory, especially in the northern part and Rwenzori sector. From 19 March to 27 May, 45 security incidents were reported, in which at least 157 civilians, including 40 women, were killed by ADF and at least 21 others were injured, including 4 women. During the resulting protests, which spanned a three-week period in April, pressure groups and citizens' movements denounced the perceived inadequacy of the Government and FARDC response to insecurity and demanded the departure of the United Nations and international humanitarian actors from Beni and Butembo. Demonstrators attacked two MONUSCO bases in Beni and in Lubero and burned two humanitarian facilities in Oicha. The Congolese National Police and FARDC were deployed to disperse violent protesters and contribute to the protection of United Nations personnel and premises.

17. The Special Representative engaged with the Congolese authorities at all levels, while maintaining dialogue with civil society groups, including demonstrators and organizers, and local journalists, to defuse tensions and reaffirm the commitment of MONUSCO to protecting civilians. The Mission also held meetings with traditional authorities, women leaders and youth leaders to discuss joint efforts to ensure security and protect civilians. In addition, MONUSCO and humanitarian actors intensified communication activities to counter misinformation, hate speech and incitement to violence. By the end of April, economic activity and humanitarian operations had resumed as popular support for the demonstrations subsided. However, the social and economic paralysis triggered by the unrest heightened intercommunal tensions in North Kivu, especially between the Kumu and Nande communities. On 13 April, in Buhene, Nyiragongo territory, during an intervention aimed at dispersing an intercommunal clash, FARDC soldiers caused the death of five men from the Nande community and three others from the Kumu community. With the involvement of the Congolese authorities, intercommunal tensions receded but the perception of an inadequate security response persists.

18. Mai-Mai factions attacked FARDC and Congolese National Police positions in southern Lubero territory and imposed illegal taxes on civilians. From 19 March to 27 May, 26 incidents involving Mai-Mai combatants were reported, in which at least 4 civilians were killed and 15 others, including 1 woman, were wounded.

19. In the Petit Nord area, the security situation remained unstable. From 19 March to 16 June, 133 incidents were reported, in which 65 civilians, including 11 women and 5 children, were killed and 61 others, including 7 women and 12 children, were injured. FARDC operations in Masisi territory against the Alliance des patriotes pour un Congo libre et souverain and Nyatura groups resulted in retaliatory action against civilians by armed groups. Through its good offices, MONUSCO engaged with the Congolese authorities with a view to minimizing the impact of military operations on civilians and bringing to justice those suspected of committing human rights violations.

20. In Rutshuru territory, FARDC suspended operations against the Collectif des mouvements pour le changement (CMC)/Forces de défense du peuple (FDP) and the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR) in late March, after retaking several villages in the Bukombo area. The FDLR and Nyatura groups returned to their positions once those had been vacated by FARDC, thereby maintaining control over large parts of the territory, including inside Virunga National Park.

21. In Walikale territory, between 22 and 24 May, clashes over control of mining sites reportedly occurred between the Guidon faction of Nduma défense du Congo-Rénové

(NDC-R) and the coalition of the Bwira faction of NDC-R and the Mai-Mai forces patriotiques populaires-armée du peuple, resulting in the abduction of at least 18 civilians. The Guidon faction of NDC-R steadily increased its control over large swathes of Walikale, enabling the group to recruit and reorganize.

C. South Kivu and Maniema Provinces

22. In South Kivu, the Hauts Plateaux of Uvira, Fizi and Mwenga, the territories of Kabare, Kalehe, Shabunda and Walungu, and the south of Fizi territory, as well as the neighbouring Kabambare territory in Maniema Province, experienced a sustained upsurge in armed violence.

23. In the Hauts Plateaux of Uvira, Fizi and Mwenga, hate speech and attacks persisted between community-based armed groups, pitting members of the Banyamulenge community against members of the Bafuliru and Babembe communities. Since 8 April, clashes between the Mai-Mai Gumino and Twigwaneho armed groups on one side and the Mai-Mai Ilunga and Mai-Mai Mushombe groups on the other, allegedly supported by the Burundian armed group Résistance pour un État de droit au Burundi, spread to the Moyens-Plateaux and the Ruzizi plain, which had previously been unaffected by the violence. Between 9 and 24 April, armed groups killed at least 10 civilians and set fire to 70 villages.

24. In Kalehe, tensions arose between the Hutu and Tembo communities owing to land disputes related to the exploitation of gold mines in Mushunguti locality in Kahuzi-Biega National Park. From 1 to 23 April, 73 people, including 17 women, were killed by Mai-Mai Raia Mutomboki and suspected Nyatura elements, and 15,189 households were displaced.

D. Tanganyika Province

25. The security situation continued to improve, notwithstanding isolated incidents attributed to Mai-Mai groups in Nyunzu and Kalemie territories. The Bendera-Kalemie road and the north Lukuga sector in Nyunzu territory remained hotspots owing to Mai-Mai Apa Na Pale and Mai-Mai Kabeke activity. Between 19 March and 3 June, 53 civilians, including 12 women, were killed by Mai-Mai elements and 42 civilians, including 16 women, were wounded.

26. In Nyunzu territory, Mai-Mai Apa Na Pale resumed activities after a lull owing to FARDC operations in the north Lukuga sector, thus threatening the de-escalation of tensions between the Twa and Bantu communities. On 14 April, the group attacked a FARDC unit and killed five soldiers near Mukundi village. In addition, on 23 April and 5 May, respectively, three soldiers were killed in Kahendwa village and five others were killed in an ambush near Kalume village, along the Bendera-Kalemie road. Between 19 March and 3 June, 19 FARDC soldiers were killed in Nyunzu territory by Mai-Mai elements.

E. Kasai and Kasai Central Provinces

27. In Kasai, from 27 to 29 March, violence related to a dispute over the administrative boundaries of Kasai and Kasai Central between the Kuba and the Lulua communities in Muanga left at least eight women, three men and three children dead. Over 100 houses were looted and burned, causing the population to flee to Kakenge and Mweka. With the involvement of the local authorities, the tension was defused, and the population returned to their villages.

IV. Human rights situation

28. Between March and April, MONUSCO documented 1,084 human rights violations and abuses, which is a 5 per cent decrease compared with the previous reporting period. More than 90 per cent of the documented violations were committed in conflict-affected provinces. Most were documented in Masisi, Beni and Rutshuru territories of North Kivu; Irumu, Djugu and Mambasa territories of Ituri; and Uvira, Fizi and Shabunda territories of South Kivu. Armed groups, especially Nyatura, ADF and FDLR, perpetrated 54 per cent of the violations. These included a high number of abductions and other violations of the right to liberty and security of person, involving 445 victims (368 men, 55 women and 22 children), as well as violations of the right to physical integrity, involving 302 victims (192 men, 97 women and 13 children). State agents were responsible for 46 per cent of the violations, particularly of the right to liberty and security of person, involving 398 victims (334 men, 36 women and 28 children), and the right to physical integrity, involving 300 victims (154 men, 103 women and 43 children). At least 394 people, including 84 women and 37 children, were victims of extrajudicial and summary killings, which is similar to the previous reporting period. Violations related to democratic space increased by 19 per cent, owing to a rise in violations of the right to physical integrity and freedom of peaceful assembly.

29. MONUSCO continued to support the Congolese authorities in combating impunity and prosecuting suspects of war crimes, crimes against humanity and other serious human rights violations. MONUSCO supported mobile court hearings held in Iga-Barrière and Bunia from 1 March to 1 April. Subsequently, on 1 April, the military garrison court of Ituri sentenced 21 male CODECO combatants to life in prison for crimes against humanity committed in Djugu territory between December 2017 and March 2020. The court awarded reparations to the civil parties, including compensation and measures to help them to rebuild their lives. In addition, a Mai-Mai Raia Mutomboki leader in Kahuzi-Biega National Park in South Kivu, “Chance”, was charged with crimes against humanity and war crimes, including the recruitment of children. On 29 April, a FARDC officer, Major Mazambi Bozy, was arrested on charges of complicity in these crimes.

30. With MONUSCO support, members of the national security forces accused of several serious crimes faced trial before the military courts of South Kivu, Beni and the former Kasai Occidental. The courts found seven FARDC members guilty of child rape, four FARDC and two Congolese National Police members guilty of rape, one FARDC member guilty of indecent assault, three FARDC members guilty of murder and two FARDC members guilty of participation in an insurrectional movement.

31. MONUSCO advocated the adoption of a law on the protection and promotion of the rights of indigenous Pygmy peoples. On 7 April, the National Assembly unanimously adopted the law, which is now before the Senate. The law promotes the participation of such peoples in decisions affecting them, including decisions regarding the allocation and use of land and natural resources.

V. Humanitarian situation

32. The humanitarian situation deteriorated further as a result of violence, epidemics and the eruption of Mount Nyiragongo in North Kivu on 22 May. The socioeconomic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic continued to exacerbate existing vulnerabilities stemming from a lack of access to essential services. As at 17 June, the humanitarian response plan for the Democratic Republic of the Congo for 2021, which calls for

\$1.98 billion to meet the priority needs of 9.6 million of the 19.6 million people in need of humanitarian assistance in the country, was 12 per cent funded.

33. An estimated 5 million people are internally displaced. The country also hosts over 500,000 refugees, including 71,559 persons who fled the Central African Republic in the wake of the elections in December 2020. The eruption of Mount Nyiragongo on 22 May killed at least 32 people and displaced over 230,000 people from Goma to Sake, Rutshuru, Kitshanga, Beni, Minova, Bukavu and other locations. An estimated 50,000 people also fled to Rwanda. Humanitarian actors continue to provide assistance, while MONUSCO is supporting the Congolese authorities in ensuring security in affected areas in Goma. On 7 June, the Prime Minister announced that the risks related to volcanic activity had subsided sufficiently to allow the population to return to Goma. As at 15 June, 80 to 90 per cent of the population had returned, according to estimates from the North Kivu provincial authorities. The Government is developing a comprehensive action plan aimed at strengthening surveillance and early warning systems in a sustainable manner.

34. Food insecurity remains a major challenge. On 6 April, the nineteenth cycle of the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification survey revealed that 27.3 million Congolese citizens, 50.8 per cent of whom are women, are experiencing high levels of acute food insecurity and require urgent aid, compared with 15.6 million people in January 2020. Of those 27.3 million people, 6.7 million are food insecure at emergency level (level 4). The increase in the number of people in a situation of acute food insecurity is partly attributable to the survey's improved coverage of urban areas.

35. On 3 May, the Ministry of Health declared the end of the Ebola virus disease resurgence in North Kivu. From 7 February, when the resurgence was first announced, to 3 May, 12 cases were recorded, which resulted in six deaths. Four of those who died were women, while three men and three women survived. Surveillance and the provision of assistance to survivors are still needed to prevent a further resurgence.

36. The investigation launched in December 2020 by the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) into allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse in Beni, Mangina and Lukaya during the response to the tenth Ebola outbreak identified three alleged perpetrators from United Nations entities, whose details will be sent to the Congolese authorities for appropriate action. OIOS also received reports of other alleged cases of sexual exploitation and abuse, involving international and local non-governmental organizations (NGOs), State agents and local security companies, and is investigating new allegations reported in Butembo. No allegations involving MONUSCO staff were reported.

37. As at 16 June, the country had registered 36,222 cases of COVID-19 in 23 of its 26 provinces, which had resulted in 857 deaths since March 2020, in a context of limited testing capacity. In March, the Democratic Republic of the Congo received 1.7 million vaccine doses through the COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access Facility, before postponing the initial roll-out to permit further investigation of a potential link to blood clots. Subsequently, 1.3 million doses were exported to six other African countries, following consultations with the World Health Organization and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), to enable their use before expiry. The Ministry of Health launched a national vaccination campaign on 19 April, and as at 16 June, 35,847 people in seven provinces had received a first dose of the vaccine under the campaign. On 3 June, the Ministry officially announced a third wave of the pandemic.

38. The volatile security situation and severe access constraints, particularly in the eastern part of the country, continued to hinder humanitarian operations. From March to April, at least 57 security incidents directly affecting humanitarian workers and assets were reported.

VI. Protection of civilians

A. Mission strategies and political processes

39. In May, MONUSCO developed an action plan to address the deteriorating security and humanitarian situation in the Hauts Plateaux of Uvira, Fizi and Mwenga territories in South Kivu. In the plan, which is embedded in the existing area-based strategy for South Kivu, it identifies joint areas of intervention at the regional and international levels to de-escalate tensions in these territories, in coordination with the Special Envoy and the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide.

B. Field-level responses

40. MONUSCO launched 15 standing combat deployments, 19 joint assessment missions and 1 joint protection mission in Ituri, North Kivu, South Kivu and Tanganyika. The Community Alert Network system received, on average, 365 early-warning alerts per month, compared with 330 during the previous reporting period. Alerts originated mostly from South Kivu and North Kivu, which accounted for 43 and 48 per cent, respectively, of all alerts, compared with 45 and 49 per cent during the previous reporting period. The national security and defence forces and/or MONUSCO responded to 60 per cent of these alerts.

41. To support the sustainable development of national capacity in explosive ordnance disposal, MONUSCO, through the Mine Action Service, trained 24 deminers, including 5 women, from national NGOs in Goma and Kalemie. In addition, MONUSCO, through the Mine Action Service, continued to tackle explosive ordnance disposal threats resulting from conflict in the eastern provinces. From 19 March to 2 June, 116 spot tasks were carried out and 112 explosive remnants of war were destroyed by a national implementing partner of the Mine Action Service, resulting in increased security in areas inhabited by 7,000 women and 6,200 men, 5,300 girls and 4,600 boys in Ituri, North Kivu, South Kivu and Tanganyika.

42. In Ituri, MONUSCO maintained a high operational tempo to address the security situation and protect civilians, including internally displaced persons, repelling incursions and ensuring safe humanitarian access through robust patrolling. On 15 April, it escorted 372 civilians from N'Bassa and Lilo, Djugu territory, to safe locations. The Mission extended the Community Alert Network to 21 locations, including by establishing six new local protection committees in Irumu territory. The Network now covers 296 villages in Ituri.

43. In North Kivu, MONUSCO maintained its operations despite demonstrations directed in part against the United Nations. In this context, it supported the Congolese National Police in the protection of civilians and public order management tasks, in compliance with the human rights due diligence policy. The Mission engaged with the Nande and Kumu communities to reduce communal tensions triggered by the demonstrations. The Community Alert Network was extended to 19 new villages, with a focus on the Rwenzori sector, covering 398 villages across the province. In the Grand Nord area, the MONUSCO Intervention Brigade provided area security and responded to ADF attacks, in support of FARDC. The Intervention Brigade repelled at least seven attacks in Mamove, Ngenza, Kilia, Mutwanga, Mabisako, Samboko and Lahe, including during joint interventions with FARDC. On 10 May, the MONUSCO standing combat deployment at Kilia was attacked by suspected ADF combatants, resulting in the death of one peacekeeper.

44. In Kididiwe, FARDC, with MONUSCO support, has completed 60 per cent of the construction of the first of seven company operating bases. After its planned completion by 30 June, the company operating base will enhance the ability of FARDC to conduct operations effectively, especially in border areas. The Mine Action Service performed an improvised explosive device threat assessment, which confirmed the risk to civilians and the military near Kainama, on the border between North Kivu and Ituri, owing to clashes between FARDC and ADF. Local authorities in the area have reported three improvised explosive devices to the Mine Action Service since 19 March. MONUSCO increased its preparedness by deploying an improved explosive device disposal team from the Mine Action Service to Beni, which will provide explosive hazard assessment training to FARDC, national NGOs and MONUSCO uniformed personnel.

45. In the Petit Nord area, MONUSCO maintained standing combat deployments in Lukweti and Nyabiondo and deployed a joint assessment mission to Kitshanga and Mweso from 23 to 26 March. The Provincial Minister of the Interior joined the mission, during which he engaged with protection actors and the local population on the security situation. He also met with FARDC to advocate the prevention of human rights abuses and efforts to combat impunity.

46. In South Kivu, MONUSCO deployed six joint assessment missions, established a standing combat deployment in Kahololo and deployed long-range patrols to the Hauts Plateaux, the Ruzizi plain and Uvira (Moyens Plateaux) to support dialogue and engage in intercommunal consultations to de-escalate tension and strengthen protection mechanisms and area security along route nationale 5 following the resurgence of violence. In addition, in March a joint assessment mission was deployed to Bwegera in the Ruzizi plain to identify action to respond to protection concerns and support the safe return of internally displaced persons. Furthermore, MONUSCO deployed a joint assessment mission with the provincial government to undertake mediation efforts, which supported the de-escalation of tensions between the Hutu and Tembo communities in Kalehe territory and enabled the gradual return of the displaced population.

47. In Tanganyika, on 2 May, MONUSCO deployed to Kongolo territory, in partnership with the Territory Administrator and representatives of the provincial civilian protection services and provincial youth council. The Mission raised awareness of the civilian protection service's early warning system and encouraged ownership of protection actions and responsibilities in the context of the phased drawdown of MONUSCO from the province.

VII. Stabilization and the strengthening of State institutions

A. Stabilization and root causes of conflict

48. MONUSCO continued to support the International Security and Stabilization Support Strategy. In Ituri, projects financed by the Stabilization Coherence Fund contributed to the completion of construction of the magistrates' court in Djugu-Centre. The court will address legal disputes over issues at the centre of communal conflicts, such as land rights and cattle theft. The ongoing qualitative tracking study shows that the population has welcomed these projects.

B. Security sector and justice system reforms

49. FARDC continued to implement the Army Reform Plan and identify priority activities. Among these activities, FARDC, in collaboration with MONUSCO, organized a workshop in Kinshasa, from 14 to 17 June, for officers in leadership positions to enhance the management of human and material resources.

50. On 13 May, a national consultative forum on security sector reform was held, aiming to foster national ownership and build consensus for a national strategy on security sector reform. In this context, MONUSCO engaged with national reform advisers from the police, army, intelligence and corrections sectors and the National Commission for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons and the Reduction of Armed Violence, as well as line ministries, Parliament, the National Security Council and the National Oversight Mechanism.

51. The joint police sector reform programme continued to be developed jointly with the Government, MONUSCO, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations country team and other stakeholders involved in police sector reform. The draft programme builds on strategic priorities deriving from the national reform plan, the five-year plan of action (2020–2024), namely institutional support, professionalism, accountability and efforts to combat impunity. It aims to strengthen the Inspectorate General and the Commissariat General at both the central and local levels.

52. On 7 April, the first Steering Committee meeting of the Joint Justice Reform Support Programme was held in Kinshasa, chaired by the President of the Supreme Council of the Judiciary, the Deputy Minister of Justice, the Deputy Special Representative/Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator and the UNDP Country Director. The participants approved the annual workplan for 2021 and the outcomes of provincial workshops held in December 2020 and March 2021, allowing the implementation phase to begin.

53. From 22 to 31 March, the regional court of Butembo held hearings in Lubero with MONUSCO support and convicted 11 men of sexual violence, 1 of murder and 4 of robbery. From 26 to 30 March, MONUSCO supported a joint mission of civilian and military prosecutors to Nyunzu, Tanganyika, to investigate allegations of crimes perpetrated between January and May 2020 by Twa- and Bantu-affiliated armed groups. The mission enabled prosecutors to interview 16 male witnesses and identify victims. MONUSCO also supported the military prosecutor's investigations into ADF-related crimes in North Kivu, with 53 victims, including 36 women, interviewed between 23 April and 2 May.

54. MONUSCO supported the national authorities in their management of 11 detention facilities, with a focus on improving security and detention conditions. The Mission funded the construction of a perimeter wall and solar lighting at Kangbayi prison in Beni to prevent attacks, and engaged with the Ministry of Justice and provincial governors to address food insecurity in detention facilities in a sustainable manner. On 1 April, the joint committee for the implementation of the action plan for women and juveniles in prison, which was adopted on 20 October 2020, met to develop protection mechanisms and a gender strategy for the prison administration.

C. Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration

55. The Special Representative continued to employ her good offices to engage with the President and the Prime Minister concerning the rapid establishment of a new disarmament, demobilization, community reintegration and stabilization framework.

56. At the provincial level, the FRPI disarmament and demobilization process remained stalled owing to persistent disagreements between the Government and the FRPI leadership regarding the latter's demands for a general amnesty and integration into FARDC. Consequently, the National Steering Board of the Stabilization Coherence Fund, co-chaired by the Minister of Planning and the Deputy Special Representative/ Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator, will be invited to support a revision of the reintegration project led by the International Organization for Migration, which has been on hold since 1 December 2020 as a result of the stalled FRPI process.

57. MONUSCO disarmed and provided reinsertion support to 120 disengaged Congolese combatants, including 6 women. This included two Mai-Mai Raia Mutomboki leaders, Munyololo Mbaio Ndarumanga and Mazi Bukera Shaba, along with 76 combatants, who handed over 28 weapons. Furthermore, 22 male Rwandan combatants were disarmed and accommodated in MONUSCO transit centres, along with 11 dependants, including 5 women. Twelve male combatants associated with an armed group, with four dependants, were also voluntarily repatriated to Rwanda.

VIII. Women and peace and security

58. The new Government includes 15 women in ministerial posts, representing 27 per cent of the total number of positions. They include the Minister of the Environment, which is also one of four deputy prime minister posts, the Minister of Mines, the Minister of Portfolio, the Minister of Labour, the Minister for Gender, Family and Children, the Minister for Vocational Training and Culture and the Minister for Relations with Parliament.

59. While falling short of the 30 per cent envisaged by the President in his address to the nation on 6 December 2020, the composition of the Government is a milestone towards the equitable representation of women in political institutions. Furthermore, the Government's programme of action contains measures to support women's empowerment, protect their rights and physical integrity, facilitate their inclusion in the economy through financial assistance, combat sexual and gender-based violence and support victims, and improve reproductive health.

60. On 15 April, as part of efforts to advance security sector reform, MONUSCO organized a workshop in Kinshasa with gender focal points from security institutions to discuss barriers to the recruitment, retention, career development and promotion of women in the security sector. MONUSCO also engaged with civil society organizations to support the mapping of women serving in the security institutions and ensure their meaningful participation. In addition, on 18 May, the Special Representative met with the African Women Leaders Network to discuss the Mission's role in supporting peace and security in the country, as well as the role of civil society in the Mission's upcoming transition.

61. On 5 May, MONUSCO and the Ministry of Gender, Family and Children participated in the thirteenth meeting of the Advisory Board for Women, Peace and Security in the Great Lakes Region. The Board approved the Women, Peace and Security Action Plan for the United Nations Strategy for Peace Consolidation, Conflict Prevention and Conflict Resolution in the Great Lakes Region.

62. In line with the United Nations Youth Strategy, on 29 and 30 April, MONUSCO, UNDP and the National Institute of Statistics presented the results of the Poll#21 on Local Perceptions to 50 young people, including 12 women, from research centres, colleges, universities and the media in Bukavu, South Kivu.

IX. Child protection and sexual violence in conflict

63. From March to April, MONUSCO verified 281 grave violations against children, representing an increase of 27.6 per cent compared with the previous reporting period. A total of 51 children, including 11 girls, were killed or maimed. Twenty-three of these children were killed by armed groups during targeted attacks. Twenty girls were raped or subjected to other forms of sexual violence. Eight rapes were attributed to State agents, representing a drop of 11 per cent compared with the previous period.

64. MONUSCO recorded 133 children, including 7 girls, recruited or used in conflict during the reporting period. While 17 of the newly recorded children, comprising 13 boys and 4 girls, are still associated with armed groups, 116 others escaped or were separated, mainly from Mai-Mai Apa Na Pale (29 boys and 1 girl), Nyatura (23 boys), Mai-Mai Raia Mutomboki (15 boys and 5 girls) and Mai-Mai Mazembe (16 boys). Of the 133 children, 31 were new recruits and 2 were voluntarily released by armed groups.

65. Following the eruption of Mount Nyiragongo, MONUSCO, UNICEF, the Congolese authorities and local and international child protection actors provided family tracing, reunification support and psychosocial services to 1,092 children separated from their parents, 731 of whom were later reunited.

66. Between March and April, at least 124 adults, including 1 man, were victims of documented conflict-related sexual violence, mostly in South Kivu (36 per cent of victims), Ituri (27 per cent of victims) and North Kivu (14 per cent of victims). Of these adults, 65 were victims of conflict-related sexual violence committed by armed groups, 50 were victims of FARDC soldiers and 8 were victims of Congolese National Police officers. Among the armed groups, Nyatura, Mai-Mai Raia Mutomboki and FDLR were the main perpetrators.

X. Exit strategy

67. The Special Representative continues to engage with the Government on the implementation of the joint strategy for the progressive and phased drawdown of MONUSCO, as well as the development of a transition plan by September, as requested in Security Council resolution [2556 \(2020\)](#). A joint working group, which brings together the Government and the United Nations, has been established to define the practical modalities, including benchmarks, of the transfer of tasks to the Government, with the support of the United Nations country team, the humanitarian country team, civil society and other stakeholders. United Nations entities have established internal strategic and technical mechanisms to coordinate with government counterparts on the development of a transition plan, with a focus on the protection of civilians and human rights, community-based disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and stabilization, and institutional reforms and good governance. The Mission and the United Nations country team organized a retreat from 7 to 11 June dedicated to preparing for the upcoming discussions on transition with the Government. The Mission has also been engaging with international partners to identify security sector reform benchmarks in the context of transition planning and initiated a mapping of United Nations support for security sector reform.

68. In the Kasai provinces, MONUSCO ceased operational activities on 30 April in anticipation of its withdrawal from the provinces by 30 June, in line with Security Council resolution [2556 \(2020\)](#). Furthermore, the Mission continued to make progress with the provincial authorities and the United Nations country team on the transfer of tasks to the Government, in liaison with civil society and NGOs. This includes efforts to strengthen the capacity of the provincial authorities and civil society to support the protection of civilians, human rights and mediation at the

community level, to strengthen the rule of law by increasing the capacity of the Congolese National Police to perform policing functions, to improve prison administration, conditions and security, and to strengthen the capacity of military and civilian justice systems. Similarly, MONUSCO coordinated with UNDP to assist the provincial authorities with the refurbishment of detention facilities and promote respect for human rights in Kananga, Mbuji-Mayi, Tshikapa and Kabinda.

69. On 22 May, the 30-month project on peace, justice, reconciliation and reconstruction in Kasai Central, funded by the Peacebuilding Fund and led by UNDP, the United Nations Joint Human Rights Office in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and an NGO, Search for Common Ground, came to an end. The project contributed to the United Nations transition in the province by rehabilitating seven community infrastructure projects and facilitating a popular consultation process that led to the establishment of a provincial truth and reconciliation commission. The project enabled the development and implementation of a provincial strategy to fight impunity, extending access to justice to 1,200 victims and enabling the prosecution and conviction of eight individuals for crimes against humanity and war crimes.

70. In the context of the transition in the Kasai provinces, in April, MONUSCO co-organized a multi-stakeholder workshop in Kananga on operationalizing the humanitarian-development-peace nexus approach, which involved the Kasai and Kasai Central provincial authorities, the United Nations, NGOs, civil society, the World Bank and other stakeholders. The workshop resulted in the establishment of provincial coordination mechanisms and the identification of four territories as priority areas for geographical convergence between the actors involved.

71. In Tanganyika, MONUSCO is working with the provincial authorities, the United Nations country team, civil society and other stakeholders to prepare for its progressive and responsible withdrawal by mid-2022. To that end, the Mission and the country team in Kalemie are developing a joint provincial transition plan that contains the following priorities: protecting civilians to prevent violence and human rights violations, especially in Nyunzu territory; establishing a safe and secure environment for displaced persons and host communities; building capacity within provincial institutions and among local customary leaders to maintain a protective environment and combat human rights abuses, including sexual violence; effectively addressing intercommunal conflict; and implementing durable solutions and peacebuilding initiatives in order to restore livelihoods.

XI. Mission effectiveness

A. Mission performance

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

72. Since 19 March, the force has conducted 23,887 patrols and launched 15 standing combat deployments, maintaining its operational activities compared with the previous reporting period. Fourteen of the 39 units were inspected, with 4 assessed as excellent, 4 as optimal and 2 as above average. The inspections recommended greater implementation of best practices as identified by the Operational Effectiveness Team, especially in relation to security systems.

73. Women represent 19 per cent of military staff officers and military observers and 5 per cent of military contingent members. With the most recent deployment of one mixed engagement team as part of the Tanzanian quick reaction force in May, MONUSCO currently has 14 female and mixed engagement teams carrying out mounted and foot patrols to address security and protection needs.

74. The enhancement of the Intervention Brigade headquarters and intelligence capabilities is nearly complete. The Tactical Intelligence Unit has reached full operational capacity. The Geolocation Threat Analysis Unit has started operating from Goma and a detachment was deployed to Beni territory in May. An additional 20 staff officers have deployed since the previous report, bringing the total number of new staff officers deployed to the Intervention Brigade headquarters to 35 of the expected 37. The first of the four quick reaction forces has deployed and has been operational since May, while the remaining three are scheduled to deploy by July 2021.

75. Internal inspections were conducted of the contingent-owned equipment of all eight of the Mission's formed police units. The inspections highlighted the need to enhance the mobility and operational capabilities of each unit, replace equipment or improve conservation conditions, decommission ammunition in some units and enhance COVID-19 prevention and response measures.

76. On 31 March, the Mission's police component conducted a quarterly performance evaluation of 351 individual police officers, including 125 women. The 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 revealed a decline from 70.9 to 70.1 per cent since the previous report. In response, the police component organized nine sessions of induction training for the 26 newly deployed individual police officers, including 2 female officers. In addition, 186 online training sessions were provided to enhance the capabilities and situational awareness of individual police officers.

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

77. With the completion of the results framework, MONUSCO is moving on to the second phase of implementation of the Comprehensive Planning and Performance Assessment System. The results framework includes key performance indicators drawn from the joint strategy on the progressive and phased drawdown of MONUSCO and a mapping of MONUSCO outputs. To oversee the implementation of the System, the Mission has developed an implementation plan and established governance and coordination mechanisms, including an implementation group and related working groups.

3. Impact of the pandemic on mandate implementation

78. MONUSCO continued to respond to the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic by engaging with the Congolese authorities and implementing mitigation measures, including the quarantining of newly deployed uniformed personnel. MONUSCO has instituted measures to mitigate the impact of the 14-day quarantine and maintain operational capacity, which include using force reserve and maintaining outgoing aviation crew while the incoming crew is in quarantine.

79. On 5 May, the United Nations launched a vaccination campaign for United Nations personnel and their dependants in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. As at 16 June, 6,734 civilian and uniformed personnel had received a first dose of the vaccine as part of the campaign.

80. As at 16 June, 677 United Nations personnel had tested positive for COVID-19, of whom 564 had recovered and 10 had died.

B. Serious misconduct, including sexual exploitation and abuse

81. From 1 March to 31 May, eight allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse involving seven military contingent members and one civilian staff member were recorded, which related to events in 2021 (1 allegation), in 2020 (1 allegation) and in earlier years (6 allegations). The allegations were referred to the appropriate investigation entities and the alleged victims were referred to the United Nations Population Fund and UNICEF for support. In addition, five allegations of other types of serious misconduct, namely harassment, fraud and theft, were recorded and referred to OIOS.

82. MONUSCO further consolidated preventive measures against misconduct, including risk assessments, the enforcement of curfews and out-of-bounds areas, and training. Moreover, it engaged with host communities on the United Nations zero-tolerance policy for sexual exploitation and abuse. Radio Okapi and community radio stations disseminated messages in local languages on the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse.

83. A total of 444 women, including 32 victims, are participating in vocational skills training in Bunia, Beni, Bujovu, Kalemie, Kavumu and Uvira in the context of projects financed by the trust fund in support of victims of sexual exploitation and abuse.

XII. Safety and security of United Nations personnel

84. Ensuring the safety and security of United Nations personnel and facilities remained a priority, in line with the Action for Peacekeeping commitments. As at 3 June, 209 security incidents affecting United Nations personnel and facilities had been recorded during the reporting period, comprising 19 incidents related to armed conflict, 62 to crime, 61 to civil unrest and 67 to hazards. Of the personnel affected, 49 were international staff (36 men and 13 women) and 76 were national staff (67 men and 9 women).

85. Civil unrest in North Kivu in April had a significant impact on United Nations programmes and activities. Safety and security measures, including movement restrictions, were strengthened in coordination with MONUSCO uniformed components.

86. As at 16 June, MONUSCO and United Nations country team non-critical personnel and dependants have returned to Goma following their temporary relocation within the Mission's area of operations as a safety measure after the eruption of Mount Nyiragongo on 22 May.

XIII. Observations

87. The confirmation of the Government and its programme of action is an important step towards the implementation of key reforms that would place the Democratic Republic of the Congo on the path to lasting and sustainable peace, stability and development. The priority given in the Government's programme of action to restoring peace in the east of the country and improving the daily lives of the Congolese people is encouraging. I welcome the progress made towards the equitable representation of women in political institutions and am hopeful that the Government's programme of action will contribute to further advancing the women and peace and security agenda. I reaffirm the readiness of the United Nations to build on its system-wide collaborative strengths and work in an integrated manner to support the implementation of the Government's programme of action.

88. I welcome progress towards the holding of elections in 2023 and the democratic debate around inclusive and consensus-based reforms designed to improve the electoral process. I encourage all stakeholders to work towards the adoption and promulgation of relevant legislation aimed at enhancing the transparency and credibility of the electoral process and consolidating the overall democratic process and the further stabilization of the country.

89. I take note of the President and the Prime Minister's stated resolve to prioritize the implementation of critical governance, security and economic reforms as set out in the Government's programme of action. This is essential to respond to the needs of the Congolese people, address the grave security challenges in the eastern provinces and enable the strengthening of institutions. I call upon all political stakeholders, from the majority and the opposition, to maintain the momentum for achieving these goals ahead of the elections in 2023. I urge all political stakeholders to refrain from hate speech and incitement to violence that would contribute to social or political division, and to strictly uphold the Constitution. I encourage the relevant authorities of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to take all steps necessary to strengthen inclusive democratic processes and bolster the stability of institutions.

90. I am deeply concerned by the deteriorating security situation in Ituri, North Kivu and South Kivu, where armed groups continue to prey on civilians, including internally displaced persons, undermining the social fabric and threatening the integrity of the provincial political institutions. I am also deeply troubled by the persistent human rights violations and abuses, including conflict-related sexual violence, committed by armed groups and State agents. I urge the Congolese authorities to redouble their efforts to fight impunity in order to ensure that the perpetrators of these despicable crimes are held accountable.

91. The intercommunal violence in Ituri, North Kivu, South Kivu and Tanganyika is a further source of grave concern. I urge the authorities to take specific steps to address the root causes of violence, including by combating hate speech, tackling the illegal exploitation of natural resources and the trafficking in small arms, and providing alternative economic opportunities to ex-combatants and their communities through the rapid implementation of decentralized programmes for disarmament, demobilization, community reintegration and stabilization. I am encouraged that the forthcoming such programme will rule out the inclusion of former combatants in the national armed forces and police and refocus attention on support to communities as a pathway to stability and sustainable development in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region.

92. I recall the international human rights and humanitarian law obligations of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. With Ituri and North Kivu under a state of siege, I urge the Congolese authorities to act with restraint and ensure that civilians are not subjected to further hardship, including by guaranteeing untrammelled humanitarian access. The United Nations will continue to accompany the Government in tackling insecurity in the east of the country, through a partnership that will strengthen cooperation between MONUSCO and FARDC, in compliance with the human rights due diligence policy.

93. I am appalled by the killing, on 10 May, of a peacekeeper during an attack by an armed group near Beni. Her death is a tragic reminder of the risks faced by United Nations peacekeepers and their sacrifices in the service of peace. I condemn all attacks against the United Nations and humanitarian actors and urge the Congolese authorities to bring the perpetrators of such crimes to justice.

94. The humanitarian situation remains dire, as violence in conflict-affected areas, epidemics and the socioeconomic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic have left

millions of people in need of protection and humanitarian assistance. I urge all actors to ensure unfettered humanitarian access to those in need and call upon donors to support the humanitarian response plan for 2021, which remains severely underfunded. I offer my condolences to the Government and people for the loss of life caused by the eruption of Mount Nyiragongo. MONUSCO and the United Nations country team will continue to support the Government in its response to this disaster.

95. I congratulate the President on his active diplomacy as Chairperson of the African Union. The United Nations remains committed to working with the African Union and the President to promote the strategic partnership between the African Union and the United Nations at a time of renewed hope and commitment to collectively address the challenges facing the continent.

96. I remain committed to ensuring that the progressive and phased drawdown of MONUSCO proceeds in accordance with the evolution of the security situation in the provinces where the Mission is present. Having ceased operational activities in the Kasai provinces, as envisaged in the joint strategy, MONUSCO, the United Nations country team and the Congolese authorities are developing a transition plan, to be presented in my report in September.

97. 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, the Office of my Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region, members of the United Nations country team and troop- and police-contributing countries for their continued commitment to peace and security in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

