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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 51 of Security Council resolution [2502 \(2019\)](#), covers major developments in the Democratic Republic of the Congo from 17 June to 18 September 2020. It describes progress made in the implementation of the mandate of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) since my report of 18 June 2020 ([S/2020/554](#)); provides an overview of political developments, including progress towards the strengthening of State institutions and key governance and security reforms; and outlines progress made in adjusting the priorities, posture and presence of the Mission, as well as the pursuit of its comprehensive approach to the protection of civilians. The report also provides information on adjustments to the footprint of the Mission, in the context of a responsible drawdown; the development of the joint transition strategy with the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo; and implementation of the measures aimed at improving the performance of the Mission.

II. Political developments

2. Political dynamics in the Democratic Republic of the Congo during the period under review were marked by continuing tensions within the ruling Cap pour le changement (CACH)-Front commun pour le Congo (FCC) coalition, discussions over nominations to key judicial and electoral bodies and calls among some opposition and civil society actors for a dialogue on electoral reforms.

3. Attempts by FCC deputies in the National Assembly to introduce judiciary reform bills faced resistance from CACH, the opposition coalition and civil society organizations, which expressed fear that such bills could infringe on the independence of the judiciary. Amidst rising tensions, the Vice-Prime Minister in Charge of Justice resigned on 11 July. Following a meeting between President Tshisekedi and his predecessor, former President Joseph Kabila, on 2 July, the commitment to the coalition was publicly reaffirmed.

4. On 17 July, President Tshisekedi made appointments to several civilian, military and judicial bodies, including that of the first female judge to the Constitutional



Court. The Prime Minister's spokesperson subsequently questioned the legality of those appointments, as the orders had been countersigned by the Vice-Prime Minister in Charge of the Interior rather than the Prime Minister, who was on official mission within the country at the time. The FCC claimed that the ordinances were unconstitutional, as they allegedly did not follow defined procedures. Most of the decisions have nevertheless been implemented, except for the new judges appointed to the Constitutional Court, whose inauguration will take place during the next parliamentary session, starting on 15 September.

5. Tensions also surfaced when the National Assembly confirmed Ronsard Malonda as a board member of the Independent National Electoral Commission and a presumptive future president of the Commission. Protests were organized across the country by civil society organizations, the CACH and Lamuka platforms, and some faith-based groups. President Tshisekedi advised the sociopolitical groups in charge of designating board members of the Electoral Commission to harmonize their positions and seek consensus, and subsequently stated that he would not sign the ordinance appointing Mr. Malonda. Despite movement restriction measures related to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, civil society organizations actively participated in political life, organizing multiple large-scale demonstrations throughout the country against the proposed judicial reforms and the nomination of the new president of the Independent National Electoral Commission, and in favour of electoral reforms.

6. On 28 July, President Tshisekedi met with a group of 12 personalities from across the political spectrum who have been advocating a national consensus on electoral reforms. During the subsequent press conference, the Lamuka-affiliated spokesperson of the group stated that their initiative aligned with the President's views on the need for consensus among political actors and that it did not seek to create new power-sharing arrangements. The group subsequently met with the Prime Minister, the outgoing President of the Independent National Electoral Commission and the leaders of several religious and civil society organizations. FCC representatives were sceptical of the process and referred to legislative bodies as the appropriate place to discuss electoral matters.

7. The reporting period was also marked by the conviction for embezzlement and sentencing of Vital Kamerhe, President Tshisekedi's Chief of Staff and leader of the political party Union pour la Nation congolaise (UNC), to 20 years' imprisonment and 10 years of ineligibility to stand for public office. Kamerhe's appeal proceedings started on 24 July and are ongoing. The UNC and its supporters, especially in Kamerhe's native province of South Kivu, continued to criticize what they described as an unfair and politically motivated trial. Some civil society organizations, however, welcomed the result as a milestone in the fight against corruption and demanded that similar judicial proceedings be launched against members of the current and former Administrations who were presumed to have engaged in corruption.

8. The socioeconomic situation remained fragile owing to inflation, mainly driven by a weakening exchange rate of the Congolese currency and external shocks related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Central Bank of the Democratic Republic of the Congo foresees a 2.4 per cent contraction of the country's economy in the current year. At the meeting of the Committee on Economic Trends held on 18 August, the Prime Minister instructed the Vice-Prime Minister in Charge of Budget, the Minister of Finance, and the Governor of the Central Bank of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to adhere to the government cash flow plan to stabilize the national economy. At a meeting held on 9 September, the Committee noted that the stability recorded in the economic sector throughout August was linked to the macroeconomic and monetary stability pact signed between the Government and the Central Bank.

9. Further pursuing his regional diplomatic efforts, President Tshisekedi met with President Denis Sassou Nguesso of the Congo on 15 July. They discussed the issue of the return of refugees and the political situation in Burundi, following the election of President Évariste Ndayishimiye, and affirmed their support for him. They also welcomed progress in the institutional reform of the Economic Community of Central African States, to which the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo appointed Kapinga-Yvette Ngandu as the Commissioner in charge of Gender, Human and Social Development on 18 August.

10. Regarding the border dispute between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Zambia, the Southern African Development Community deployed a technical mission to the affected border area from 23 to 29 July, resulting in the adoption of a phased approach to begin demarcating the borders in September. MONUSCO also continued to coordinate closely with the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region to support the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region.

III. Security situation

A. North Kivu Province

11. The security situation deteriorated further across North Kivu as clashes between armed groups over territory and natural resources continued to pose a major threat to civilians. MONUSCO documented at least 107 incidents attributable to armed groups, in which 67 civilians were killed (34 men, 23 women and 10 children) and 73 were injured (40 men, 20 women and 13 children) across the province.

12. In Walikale territory and surrounding areas, an internal split in the Nduma défense du Congo-Rénové (NDC-R) on 8 July led to the attempted overthrow of its leader, Guidon Shimiray Mwissa, by his deputy, Gilbert Bwria. A series of clashes between the two NDC-R factions subsequently occurred around Pinga. On 18 August, approximately 485 NDC-R Bwira elements surrendered to the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (FARDC), handing in approximately 90 weapons. While the split weakened the NDC-R, the security situation did not improve, as rival armed groups moved to occupy positions vacated by the NDC-R in Rutshuru and Masisi territories and southern Lubero.

13. In Beni territory, attacks against civilians, FARDC positions and MONUSCO by suspected Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) elements continued. A MONUSCO convoy was attacked on 22 June along the Beni-Kasindi road, resulting in one peacekeeper being killed and one injured. ADF combatants carried out at least 25 attacks against civilians in the northern, north-western and south-eastern areas of Beni territory, as well as in the Irumu and Mambasa territories of Ituri Province, resulting in the deaths of 73 civilians, including 11 women and three children. The ADF also increased pressure on the FARDC, with at least 21 clashes resulting in some 50 FARDC soldiers being killed and dozens wounded. There was an increase in ADF activities near their traditional stronghold areas in the Mayangose jungle, east of Beni, and the “triangle” to the north of Beni from where they had been dislodged by the FARDC. This is possibly linked to a reduced FARDC presence in those areas in the context of growing logistical challenges to maintain forward operating bases in remote areas.

B. South Kivu and Maniema Provinces

14. The security situation in the highlands worsened considerably and was characterized by tit-for-tat militia attacks against civilians. The former FARDC Colonel Michel Rukunda, alias Makanika, who has been active since January 2020, consolidated his control over the Twigwaneho armed groups and led several raids in the Kamombo area, killing six civilians and destroying 15 schools and seven health centres. Many Babembe, Bafuliro and Banyindu community members fled the area, increasing the number of internally displaced persons in Bijombo, where MONUSCO is deployed, to 6,725 (1,122 men, 1,253 women and 4,350 children). In Mikenge, MONUSCO continued to provide protection to 2,037 internally displaced persons (328 men, 409 women and 1,300 children), most of whom are members of the Banyamulenge community. MONUSCO troops repeatedly intervened to prevent attacks on internally displaced person sites.

15. In late July, there was a further upsurge in violence in the highlands, following a Mai-Mai raid on Banyamulenge cattle and a subsequent Twigwaneho retaliatory attack on Kipupu. A joint government-MONUSCO verification mission to Kipupu on 29 July determined that a total of 15 civilians, including the Kipupu locality chief, had been killed during the clashes.

16. In the northern part of South Kivu, following a security vacuum created by the redeployment of some FARDC units to other conflict hotspots, the former Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR)/Conseil national pour le renouveau et la démocratie began to recruit actively, especially among young people in Kalehe territory. The humanitarian and security situation in the border area between Maniema, South Kivu and Tanganyika also further deteriorated in the context of continued FARDC redeployments. The territories of Kabambare and, to a lesser extent, Kasongo, continued to be affected by the activities of Mai-Mai Malaika, resulting in the displacement of more than 1,500 families. MONUSCO also received reports of regular incursions of Twa combatants from Tanganyika into Maniema.

C. Ituri Province

17. In Djugu territory, high levels of violence continued to be attributed to loosely defined Lendu-majority armed groups, including the Coopérative pour le développement du Congo (CODECO) group, with at least 140 reported incidents. In a major attack, on 8 July, assailants raided Bunzenzele village, killing 37 civilians. A total of 11 FARDC members have also been reportedly killed in operations since mid-June. On 4 September, at least 100 Djugu-based assailants entered Bunia and went to the central prison to demand the release of their members who were detained there. Following negotiations with local authorities, defence and security forces escorted the group out of Bunia and the situation returned to relative calm. While the FARDC and MONUSCO prevented several attacks thanks to a robust early warning system, violence has affected a wide area, posing serious challenges to the effective protection of civilians. In Irumu territory, the Front patriotique et intégrationniste du Congo, mostly composed of members of the Bira community, carried out attacks against civilians, killing 22 people, including two women. Acts of violence against civilians decreased somewhat in August after the signature of a peace pledge in Mahagi territory by 42 traditional chiefs and leaders from the Lendu community and the adoption of a road map by 60 local leaders from the Alur community. However, reports of the killing of civilians, including at gold mining sites, continued to be received. Although Mahagi territory remains vulnerable to a spillover of violence from Djugu territory, the reinforcement of the FARDC presence, as well as the

community awareness-raising activities conducted by the provincial government with support from MONUSCO, led to a decrease in attacks perpetrated by assailants.

18. Continued progress in the implementation of the peace agreement between the Government and the Force de résistance patriotique de l'Ituri (FRPI) has had a positive impact on the security situation in southern Ituri. The process will ultimately result in the demobilization of around 1,100 FRPI combatants and their reintegration into their communities of origin. Nevertheless, the demobilization process has not yet commenced, owing to COVID-19-related challenges and lingering disagreements over the FRPI demand for the release from prison of its members, as well as amnesty and integration into the FARDC of some of its leaders.

D. Tanganyika Province

19. The intercommunal conflict between Bantu and Twa ethnic groups in Nyunzu territory remained a source of concern. In Kalemie territory, the mining sites in Bendera continued to be the target of incursions by different militia groups, in particular Mai-Mai Yakutumba. Other groups, such as Mai-Mai Apa Na Pale, Kabeke and Fimbo Na Fimbo, also engaged in raids, looting and ambushes in villages around artisanal mining sites. In Bendera, MONUSCO efforts to stabilize the area resulted in the surrender of 23 combatants from Mai-Mai Apa Na Pale.

E. Kasai and Kasai Central Provinces

20. The security situation in Kasai and Kasai Central remained stable, even as localized intercommunity conflict between Kuba and Lulua in Mweka territory continued to be a source of concern. Clashes in Demba and Mweka territories on 17 July and 4 August, respectively, resulted in the burning of 263 houses and the deaths of 11 civilians. MONUSCO facilitated the deployment of FARDC and Congolese National Police troops to the area to restore security. An estimated 4,468 nationals of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, including 660 women and 308 children, were returned to their country by Angolan authorities. Meanwhile, intermittent clashes between the Angolan armed forces and the FARDC were registered along the border with Angola. MONUSCO provided support to the provincial government to facilitate engagement with the Angolan authorities in search of a peaceful solution. On 16 September, Angola and the Democratic Republic of the Congo signed an agreement on cooperation in security and public order in the common border area and an agreement on the circulation of people and goods. Both States have decided to establish, in 2021, a joint permanent commission on defence and security matters.

IV. Human rights situation

21. There were 2,140 documented human rights violations and abuses across the country in the second quarter of 2020, an 8 per cent increase from the previous quarter. State agents were responsible for nearly 44 per cent of those violations. Armed groups in the conflict-affected eastern provinces, most notably those based in Djugu, committed the remainder of the violations.

22. In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, 98 human rights violations were documented in relation to the enforcement of prevention measures, of which 71 were committed by Congolese National Police agents. Those violations included the arbitrary arrest and illegal detention of 104 people, including 15 women, and the extrajudicial killing of nine people, including one woman and one child. Restrictive

measures were also used to limit the exercise of fundamental freedoms, with at least 18 violations of the right to freedom of expression and assembly in the context of the 20-person limit on gatherings imposed under the state of emergency. In response to that situation, MONUSCO organized capacity-building sessions for law enforcement officers on the promotion and protection of human rights in the context of the state of emergency.

23. The increase in the overall number of documented human rights violations is also due to sustained attacks against civilians by armed assailants, mainly in the Djugu, Irumu and Mahagi territories of Ituri Province, where at least 323 civilians were killed (including 64 women and 87 children), 156 wounded (including 58 women and 33 children) and 127 abducted (including 30 women and 18 children), and 53 women and girls were subjected to sexual violence between April and June 2020. Human rights violations by national security forces in those territories also increased, resulting in the extrajudicial killing of 11 civilians, including five women and two children. Although North Kivu saw a decrease of 13 per cent in human rights violations, it is still the province with the highest number of documented violations. South Kivu and Tanganyika registered an increase in such violations of 28 and 12 per cent, respectively, in the second quarter of 2020. MONUSCO pursued advocacy efforts at the provincial level to strengthen the protection of civilians and respect for human rights, including through participation in joint MONUSCO-FARDC committees to tackle the issue of impunity.

V. Humanitarian situation

24. On 25 June, the Minister of Health, Eteni Longondo, announced the end of the tenth Ebola virus disease outbreak in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which had started on 1 August 2018 in North Kivu and extended into Ituri and South Kivu. Over 3,400 people were infected by Ebola, more than 2,200 of whom died. Meanwhile, the eleventh Ebola outbreak was declared in Equateur Province on 1 June. As at 13 September, 121 infections, 48 deaths and 54 survivors had been reported. The epidemic increased pressure on the already limited basic social services and exacerbated the vulnerability of the affected populations, especially among women and children.

25. With the support of the humanitarian country team, the Government elaborated a three-month \$40.6 million multisectoral response plan to the Ebola outbreak, of which an estimated \$19.4 million remained unfunded by the end of August. Since then, donors have expressed interest in increasing funding to the response plan, which is currently being revised. The plan is aimed at strengthening the effectiveness of the health response, interrupting the transmission of Ebola and COVID-19 in Equateur and preventing their spread to other provinces and neighbouring countries. Drawing on lessons from the previous outbreak in the eastern part of the country, humanitarian actors adopted strategies to prevent the fraudulent activities that had weakened the previous Ebola response. The Ministry of Health and the World Health Organization (WHO) are working with other partners to address the increased risks faced by women and children as a result of the epidemic. Insufficient funding and lack of decentralized access to testing and treatment are among the major challenges hampering the response to the current Ebola outbreak.

26. On 13 September, the authorities of the Democratic Republic of the Congo reported 10,390 confirmed COVID-19 cases across 19 of the country's 26 provinces, including 264 deaths and over 9,807 recoveries. Despite a slowdown in reported new cases, the socioeconomic impact of COVID-19 may considerably worsen the humanitarian situation and have an adverse impact on social cohesion, inequality and

community resilience, while increasing poverty and the risk of human rights violations. Several ministries, civil society organizations and United Nations agencies conducted awareness-raising campaigns on gender-based violence related to COVID-19 and supported activities for women's empowerment. United Nations agencies also supported the inclusion of refugees and internally displaced persons in the national COVID-19 preparedness and response plan.

27. According to the revised Humanitarian Response Plan for the Democratic Republic of the Congo, an estimated 25.6 million citizens of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (7.5 million girls, 7.5 million boys, 5.4 million women and 5.2 million men) remained in need of assistance in 2020. The humanitarian community estimates that \$2.07 billion are required to provide assistance to 9.2 million individuals (2.7 million girls, 2.7 million boys, 1.9 million women and 1.9 million men), with only 22 per cent of this amount funded as of August.

VI. Protection of civilians

A. Mission strategies and political processes

28. My Special Representative for the Democratic Republic of the Congo met multiple times with President Tshisekedi, as well as a number of national political leaders and civil society representatives, to advocate a political approach to the protection of civilians and identify ways to address the root causes of conflict.

29. Targeted provincial strategies focusing on Ituri, North Kivu, South Kivu, Tanganyika, Kasai and Kasai Central, as well as interprovincial issues, were approved by the Mission leadership in July. The strategies are aimed at addressing the root causes of the conflict affecting the eastern part of the country, supporting the extension of State authority, ensuring progress in the fight against impunity and supporting the authorities in substantially reducing armed group violence to a level that can be autonomously managed by the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

30. Joint threat assessments and planning activities among civilian, police and military components, as well as United Nations agencies and defence and security forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, continued at the field, interprovincial and national levels. The Mission organized five capacity-building workshops on the protection of civilians for 114 participants to strengthen capacity to analyse threats, draft community protection plans and improve coordination with local authorities and security forces. For example, during a workshop held in Kalemie, participants developed a one-year road map for a gradual transfer of tools for the protection of civilians to the Civilian Protection Division of the provincial Ministry of the Interior, in close partnership with civil society organizations.

31. In line with the Action for Peacekeeping principles to advance nationally owned political solutions to conflict, MONUSCO supported provincial authorities in Ituri in holding a series of consultations that resulted in the signing of a peace pledge in Mahagi territory by 42 traditional chiefs and leaders, including eight women, from the Lendu community, and the adoption of a road map by 60 local leaders, including nine women, from the Alur community. Consultations held in July with traditional chiefs from the five communities in Djugu territory (Hema, Lendu, Ndo Okebo, Nyali and Mambisa) led to commitments to engaging in a dialogue process and working towards the disengagement of communities from armed groups.

32. The Mission also undertook efforts to identify locally led solutions with authorities and community leaders during the transhumance period. Following

community consultations held in May and November 2019, MONUSCO facilitated a structured dialogue in Minova, from 24 to 26 June, in which 119 participants elaborated a road map to promote, on the one hand, sustainable peace in Kalehe territory in South Kivu and, on the other hand, the establishment of a local monitoring committee to address land and community conflict, armed group activities and governance issues.

B. Field-level responses

33. In Ituri Province, in response to militia violence, MONUSCO consolidated its force presence to enhance intelligence gathering and protect civilians through area domination. The Mission also maintained its support for the FARDC through intelligence-sharing, medical evacuations and logistical assistance, as well as the provision of training on human rights and international humanitarian law to FARDC troops.

34. In North Kivu, MONUSCO further strengthened its force presence in Beni territory to address security concerns arising from ADF activities. The operational area of the Intervention Brigade of the force was expanded to cover a part of southern Irumu territory in Ituri, where the ADF continued to operate. A temporary operating base was set up in the Halungupa-Mutwanga area to facilitate the reconstruction of a bridge over the Hululu river and to deter armed group presence. A second temporary operating base was set up along the Mavivi-Oicha axis to increase security along National Road 4. In addition, the Mission pursued its efforts to improve coordination with the FARDC, increasing joint patrolling and assisting the FARDC in thwarting several ADF attacks. MONUSCO support for the FARDC also included the sharing of intelligence based on unmanned aerial surveillance system imagery of ADF camps, which contributed to dismantling at least two ADF strongholds. At the same time, the FARDC capacity to maintain a sustained presence in jungle camps previously captured from the ADF remained a significant challenge. MONUSCO supported rehabilitation work on four roads in Beni territory to facilitate access for patrolling, FARDC movements and civilian travel and commerce.

35. In Masisi, Rutshuru and Lubero territories, in North Kivu, MONUSCO implemented 14 standing combat deployments to protect civilians, including internally displaced persons, in response to increased armed group activity following clashes between NDC-R and Mai-Mai groups. Additional air and land patrols to extend the security perimeter and disrupt armed group movements were conducted. MONUSCO has been closely monitoring the split of the NDC-R into two factions and the subsequent impact on the security situation, especially in Walikale territory, which is expected to become the next conflict hotspot. The Mission established standing combat deployments in Pinga and Lukweti and carried out protection assessment missions, which helped to encourage the FARDC to increase its presence in the area.

36. In the highlands area in South Kivu, MONUSCO, in coordination with the FARDC, continued to provide physical protection to more than 5,000 internally displaced persons settled near its bases in Bijombo and Mikenge. Among other activities, peacekeepers conducted day and night patrols and secured access roads to local markets and farms for internally displaced persons. In the absence of humanitarian actors, MONUSCO also provided basic assistance to internally displaced persons, including food delivery.

37. In Shabunda territory, in South Kivu, MONUSCO established a standing combat deployment in Byangama to provide area security and conducted a joint protection team mission with the participation of members of the Panzi Foundation and provincial government officials, which allowed for the documentation of human

rights violations committed by Raia Mutomboki factions near the Tchankindo mining site. The Panzi Foundation medical team provided medical and psychosocial assistance to 148 civilians (139 women and nine men), including 48 survivors of sexual violence. Furthermore, a comprehensive report on the challenges in the area was drafted by the provincial Minister of the Interior and submitted to the Governor of South Kivu.

38. In Tanganyika Province, MONUSCO maintained its operational posture. This facilitated the surrender of 65 Twa militia members and the recovery of 45 weapons. An assessment mission to Nyunzu territory with the Deputy Humanitarian Coordinator noted the vulnerability of the populations located outside the centre of the territory. To address the chronic conflict, authorities plan to organize a conference in September to foster peace between the two communities. In addition, there are plans for political, legal, land and cultural initiatives, including the creation of a national fund for the development for indigenous Pygmies and a law protecting and promoting indigenous peoples and ensuring equitable access to public administration positions. In Maniema Province, MONUSCO established a standing combat deployment in Lubichako to provide security to joint investigation teams with the Panzi Foundation to document conflict-related sexual violence.

39. In Kasai Central, MONUSCO, together with provincial authorities, United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations, facilitated a capacity-building workshop on conflict resolution for 60 members, including 15 women, of local intercommunity platforms. The activity followed structured dialogue initiatives held in May and June, which had established six new conflict-resolution platforms. MONUSCO also established five new local protection committees around Kananga to respond to growing insecurity, ahead of the departure of the Mission from the Kasai and Kasai Central Provinces.

VII. Stabilization and the strengthening of State institutions

A. Stabilization and root causes of conflict

40. In the context of the FRPI demobilization process, the Monitoring Committee of the national Stabilization and Reconstruction Plan for Eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo proposed measures at the ministerial level, including on the topic of the proposed amnesty law, the integration of officers into the army and financial means to sustain pre-cantonment and community reinsertion, as well as the creation of a national commission on transitional justice and the creation of a compensation fund for victims of grave crimes.

41. The Stabilization Coherence Fund remained an important instrument for MONUSCO to help to address the root causes of conflict in the framework of the International Security and Stabilization Support Strategy, in partnership with the Government, the United Nations country team and civil society organizations. The Fund launched two new projects in Djugu in partnership with international non-governmental organizations to help to strengthen effective governance, trust in State authority and intercommunity social cohesion.

B. Security sector and justice system reform

42. MONUSCO continued to provide its good offices to support the efforts of the national authorities to combat impunity and address war crimes and other serious human rights violations. On 19 August, the Operational Military Court of North Kivu concluded hearings in the prosecution of Ntabo Ntaberi Sheka, the former leader of

the NDC, Nzitonda Séraphin, the leader of the FDLR, and two other defendants tried for war crimes, crimes against humanity and other crimes perpetrated in Walikale between 2007 and 2017. On 8 June, the same Court also started to examine the Miriki priority case, which involved 20 suspected members of Mai-Mai Mazembe/Union des patriotes pour la défense des innocents and FDLR/Forces combattantes abacunguzi (FOCA) charged with war crimes, crimes against humanity and participation in an insurrectional movement in Walikale and Lubero in 2015 and 2016. From 15 to 19 June, hearings were held in the case related to the attack against the MONUSCO Boikene office and the mayor's office in Beni, in November 2019, in which 18 members of the Congolese National Police are reportedly involved. On 13 July, a Congolese National Police officer was sentenced to life imprisonment after being convicted of the murder of a member of the civil society organization Lutte pour le changement, who had been shot dead during a demonstration in Beni. MONUSCO provided technical and logistical support to the judicial authorities dealing with the case.

43. With respect to violence in Djugu, Mahagi and Irumu since June 2019, two FARDC members were convicted of war crimes, sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment and ordered to pay damages to victims, while 15 Djugu-based assailants were convicted of participation in an insurrectional movement and sentenced to 20 years' imprisonment. Seven similar cases involving 50 defendants are before the garrison military court of Bunia, with MONUSCO providing technical and financial support. In Tshikapa, the military court confirmed the convictions for murder and the sentences to death or long imprisonment of five FARDC members. It should be noted, however, that, despite the death sentences, the moratorium on the death penalty remains in force. In South Kivu, 137 victims and witnesses, including 132 women, testified in the Lubichako case in relation to rapes and other atrocities allegedly perpetrated by a Twa militia and Mai-Mai Mayele elements. The investigation into these cases in Fizi and Kabambare was supported by MONUSCO.

44. MONUSCO continued to pursue an integrated approach to security sector reform, leveraging its good offices to help national authorities to address conflict drivers and pursue long-term institutional transformation. Efforts focused on identifying entry points for offering good offices in future, following the reshuffle of 17 July within the FARDC leadership, and on strengthening cooperation among relevant Mission components to ensure the provision of more coherent and integrated advisory support to security institutions. As a result of COVID-19 restrictions, capacity-building and confidence-building activities remained suspended. However, remote engagement with the FARDC continued with a view to maintaining momentum for reforms.

45. The MONUSCO police component continued to engage national counterparts remotely, as monthly international coordination meetings were temporarily interrupted as a result of the pandemic. Priority areas included working with the Police Reform Monitoring Committee for the implementation of the five-year reform action plan aimed at enhancing transparency, professionalism and accountability. In collaboration with WHO, the national Ministry of Health, security forces and judicial authorities, MONUSCO police also continued to support the tracing and geolocation of COVID-19 cases. The Mission also provided technical advice and supported the implementation of COVID-19 restrictive measures in compliance with human rights and international policing standards.

46. The situation in prisons remained challenging, with the prison population exceeding the holding capacity by about 235 per cent. At least 27 people, including one woman, died in detention during the second quarter of the year from various causes, including hunger, lack of proper medical assistance and violence between and against detainees. In addition, more than 105 inmates escaped from detention centres.

Both figures represent a decrease from those recorded in the previous quarter. In the context of COVID-19, MONUSCO continued to monitor the situation in detention facilities, including police stations and holding cells, and advocated measures to reduce prison overcrowding. As a result, 3,214 detainees were released by judicial authorities. MONUSCO continued to follow up on the recommendations adopted at the joint high-level advocacy workshop on the management of children and women prisoners in conflict, while providing technical and logistical support for the drafting and adoption of new prison laws.

C. Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration

47. Supporting the development of a national framework for community disarmament, demobilization and reintegration remained a priority for MONUSCO engagement at all levels, including with local authorities and FARDC leadership at the provincial levels. Specifically, the Mission supported the Ituri provincial authorities and the North Kivu and South Kivu interprovincial community disarmament, demobilization and reintegration commission in developing disarmament, demobilization and reintegration road maps, which were presented to the national Government for consideration. On 31 August, during an extraordinary meeting on peace and development in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo attended by my Special Representative and the Governors of North Kivu, South Kivu and Ituri, President Tshisekedi stressed the need to break the routine of integrating armed group elements into the national armed forces and granting them amnesty.

48. In Ituri, two groups of Djugu-based assailants announced their intention to cease hostilities and disarm, following an engagement with a delegation of former armed group leaders commissioned by President Tshisekedi. In North Kivu, the Mission seized opportunities created by the split within the NDC-R and the fighting between two Mai-Mai Mazembe factions to facilitate the disarmament of 137 combatants (all male) and the recovery of 84 weapons. In Tanganyika, 62 Mai-Mai Apa Na Pale and affiliated combatants (all male) surrendered and handed over 52 weapons, following heightened awareness-raising efforts in Kalemie territory.

49. In North Kivu, the efforts of the Mission resulted in an expression of interest by the FARDC Sukola II Operations Commander to work with MONUSCO on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, including joint weapons and ammunition management activities, to increase their transparency. In South Kivu, building on the successful disarmament of 120 Mai-Mai Maheshe (including 14 women) in May, the Mission held discussions with the South Kivu Governor on the further expansion of provincial disarmament, demobilization and reintegration efforts.

50. A total of 213 ex-combatants of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (all male) were demobilized by MONUSCO, and 74 children (62 boys and 12 girls) were separated from armed groups and handed over to child protection partners for reunification with their families. Six Rwandan male ex-combatants and seven dependants (one man and six women) were also demobilized, but as with the 36 foreign ex-combatants and dependants (24 male and 12 female) already in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration transit centres, could not be repatriated, owing to COVID-19 travel restrictions.

51. Despite the fact that many of the MONUSCO community violence reduction efforts were suspended owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, MONUSCO tailored some of its community violence reduction projects to support the national health response. For example, in Kananga, several awareness-raising sessions with local authorities,

women and youth representatives in several locations were delivered. The Mission took advantage of those opportunities to explain and promote the implementation of COVID-19 preventive measures.

VIII. Women and peace and security

52. MONUSCO continued to advance the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda through targeted engagement with national, provincial and local authorities, as well as by advocating increased space for the representation and participation of women, including in decision-making processes related to COVID-19. In Kinshasa, the Mission conducted awareness-raising activities related to the socioeconomic impact of the pandemic on women for about 280 participants and organized discussions on gender perspectives in the pandemic-related response of the FARDC and Congolese National Police, involving some 800 participants. MONUSCO, in collaboration with the Ministry of Gender, Family and Children, also organized a working session to validate a strategic document on priority actions for a better integration of the women and peace and security agenda into initiatives aimed at responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.

53. Public advocacy and technical support for civil society organizations also continued to be important tools for the promotion of an active participation of women in conflict resolution. The Mission conducted 13 capacity-building sessions with female mediators, women with disabilities and representatives of community-based conflict prevention structures. In the Boga area, Ituri Province, an early warning mechanism was established for improving the timely reporting of human rights violations, to better guide the deployment of security forces to protect high-risk populations, including through patrols.

IX. Child protection and sexual violence in conflict

54. MONUSCO verified 242 grave violations against children in Ituri, North Kivu, South Kivu, Tanganyika, Kasai and Kasai Central. A total of 23 children (20 boys and 3 girls) were reportedly killed or maimed, including 15 killed by Djugu-based assailants in Djugu and Mahagi territories. Nine girls were raped or subjected to other forms of sexual violence in North Kivu and South Kivu. The Mission recorded 185 children (151 boys and 34 girls) who escaped or were separated from armed groups, mostly from Mai-Mai Mazembe and NDC-R. Seven children were abducted and newly recruited to armed groups across the country. During clashes between CODECO elements and the FARDC, one hospital was damaged in Ituri and looted by FARDC soldiers.

55. The commanders of Apa Na Pale-Bilenge, an armed group active in Tanganyika, and of Nyatura Jean-Marie, active in North Kivu, signed unilateral declarations to end and prevent child recruitment and other grave violations of children's rights. The two agreements led to the voluntary release of seven children from Apa Na Pale-Bilenge and 31 children from Nyatura Jean-Marie. As of August 2020, a total of 33 armed groups had signed such commitments, leading to the voluntarily release of 2,007 children.

56. At least 274 persons (182 women, two men and 90 children) were subjected to sexual violence in conflict areas in the second quarter of 2020, representing a notable decrease from the 321 victims recorded in the previous quarter, partly as a result of continued advocacy by MONUSCO. As with other human rights violations, North Kivu was the province most affected (66 victims), followed by Ituri (61 victims) and South Kivu (48 victims).

57. Combatants of various armed groups and militias were responsible for conflict-related sexual violence against nearly 70 per cent of all victims recorded (191 victims, comprising two men, 134 women and 55 children). Among them, Djugu-based assailants were the main perpetrators (53 victims), followed by Twa militia members (33 victims) and NDC-R and Raia Mutomboki combatants (27 victims each). The remaining 30 per cent of the violations were committed by State agents (83 victims, comprising 48 women and 35 children), mainly FARDC soldiers (62 victims) and Congolese National Police agents (17 victims). The majority of cases of sexual violence involving State agents were committed in Haut-Katanga (29 victims), North Kivu (19 victims) and Kasai Central (13 victims).

X. Exit strategy

58. There was progress towards the development of a joint transition strategy that would allow for a progressive transfer of the tasks carried out by MONUSCO to the authorities of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the United Nations country team and other stakeholders; and a further reduction of the level of deployment and area of operations of MONUSCO. Following initial delays caused by the COVID-19 crisis and a prolonged lockdown in several cities, my Special Representative pursued her engagement on this issue with President Tshisekedi and other senior members of the Government. On 17 July, during a meeting of the Council of Ministers, the President provided a briefing on the general approach for the MONUSCO drawdown and exit, which will be based on a phased and geographically differentiated approach in line with the provisions of resolution 2502 (2019). The President called upon the Government to fully engage in the joint process. This was followed on 31 August by a meeting of my Special Representative, the President, the Prime Minister, key ministers and the Governors of the Ituri, North Kivu and South Kivu Provinces to advance discussions in key areas, notably community disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. In conjunction, and as elaborated in my previous report, MONUSCO finalized provincial strategies for the areas in which it is deployed, outlining its proposed priority areas of engagement, including the rule of law, human rights and the safe return of internally displaced persons, aimed at facilitating an eventual handover and exit.

59. In the Kasai and Kasai Central Provinces, where MONUSCO has already reduced its presence, opportunities for increased cooperation between the Mission, United Nations agencies and relevant partners were identified to ensure alignment of the national vulnerability reduction priorities of the Government, the proposed peacebuilding priorities of MONUSCO and the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework. These opportunities include the implementation of Peacebuilding Fund projects aimed at supporting the strengthening of social cohesion and trust between the population and the authorities through community policing, dialogue and socioeconomic revitalization in the two provinces, as well as initiatives to find sustainable solutions for a peaceful cohabitation between Bantu and Twa communities in Tanganyika Province. Furthermore, a commitment to jointly agreed collective outcomes in the areas of food insecurity and malnutrition, access to basic services, population displacement and gender-based violence under the peace-humanitarian development nexus approach will assist in reducing humanitarian needs, advancing the consolidation of stabilization and peace, and paving the way for sustainable development.

XI. Mission effectiveness

A. Mission performance

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

60. In line with the Action for Peacekeeping commitments, MONUSCO pursued a high level of peacekeeping performance, while also taking actions to enhance protection provided by the force. Owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, inspections of military units were suspended and did not resume until 14 September. Despite the suspension, the MONUSCO police component was able to continue performance evaluations, with five of the six formed police units rated as “satisfactory”. The sixth formed police unit was excluded from the evaluation owing to several officers testing positive for COVID-19 and the unit being quarantined. The issue of contingent-owned equipment continues to have a negative impact on the performance of the units. The timely replacement of equipment belonging to the units by police-contributing countries would enhance the performance of the units. Furthermore, the Mission continued to encourage police-contributing countries to increase the proportion of female personnel in formed police units, which currently stands at 12.8 per cent.

61. The police component also evaluated the performance of individual police officers, 29.4 per cent of whom are women. Individual police officers received an average performance rating of 81.81 per cent, compared with 76.65 during the previous quarter. In order to further improve performance, the MONUSCO police component organized training sessions, including on sexual and gender-based violence, children’s rights and protection, and command and control, for 970 individual police officers, including 242 women. An additional 115 individual police officers, including 30 women, will be trained by the end of September.

2. Progress towards the implementation of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment System

62. The Mission made further progress towards the implementation of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment System with the finalization of its results framework. The framework includes key intended outcomes and a mapping of outputs aligned with the mission concept and the provincial strategies guiding mandate implementation. It serves as a reference for the benchmarks to be included in the joint transition strategy requested by the Security Council in its resolution [2502 \(2019\)](#). The System has also provided the Mission with a COVID-19-specific framework to enable the monitoring and assessment of mitigating measures that support business continuity.

3. Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on mandate implementation

63. Following the suspension of rotations, repatriations and deployments of uniformed personnel, MONUSCO resumed the rotation of such personnel in mid-July and put in place mitigation measures, including a 14-day mandatory quarantine for all incoming units and personnel. A total of 16 rotations were carried out until August, with at least three rotations delayed as a result of positive COVID-19 cases detected during the predeployment quarantine period. A total of eight rotations are planned for September. The suspension of the rotations for several months will have an impact on the new force and police generation processes mandated in resolution [2502 \(2019\)](#) and the implementation of some of the recommendations made by Lieutenant General Carlos Alberto dos Santos Cruz in his report, including the deployment of new capabilities.

64. Only United Nations special flights in support of the protection of civilians, necessary cargo or other essential operations took place owing to ongoing COVID-19-related restrictions on movement within and outside the country. Those included special flights by MONUSCO connecting Goma to Kinshasa, and onward to Addis Ababa.

65. To ensure the safety of United Nations personnel, the medical and quarantine capabilities of all duty stations were enhanced where necessary, including the setting up or identification of 122 isolation beds in 10 locations by the Mission and the United Nations country team. As at 14 September, a total of 110 MONUSCO personnel had tested positive for COVID-19, 90 had recovered and 5 had died after contracting the virus.

B. Serious misconduct, including sexual exploitation and abuse

66. Between 1 May and 31 August 2020, five allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse involving members of military contingents, a police officer and a civilian staff member were recorded. The allegations have been referred for investigation to the concerned troop- and police-contributing countries or to the Office of Internal Oversight Services. In addition, five allegations of other types of serious misconduct were also recorded and are currently under investigation.

67. MONUSCO continued to implement robust preventive measures against misconduct, including training, risk assessments and the enforcement of curfews and out-of-bounds areas. In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, community outreach on the United Nations zero-tolerance policy was pursued predominantly through radio transmissions and text messages.

XII. Safety and security of United Nations personnel

68. Ensuring the safety and security of United Nations personnel and facilities remained a priority, in line with the Action for Peacekeeping commitments. A total of 76 incidents against United Nations personnel and facilities were recorded, comprising 11 incidents related to armed conflict, 36 to crime, 22 to civil unrest and 7 to hazards. Of the personnel affected, 9 were international staff (eight men and one woman) and 21 national staff (20 men and one woman). This represents a decrease from 87 incidents in the previous reporting period. All the cases were referred to the judicial authorities, and MONUSCO is supporting relevant investigations and trials. The COVID-19 pandemic delayed some of those processes, as judicial activities were put on hold, and most of the cases involving military staff face challenges in being finalized owing to the repatriation of the victims and witnesses.

XIII. Observations

69. I welcome the commitment of President Tshisekedi and his partners in the coalition Government to resolve their differences within the framework of the Constitution of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I am encouraged by the President's determination to reach out to all national stakeholders in an effort to build consensus on electoral reforms. At the same time, I am concerned by the increasingly partisan behaviour of some political actors who are already looking ahead to the 2023 elections. This behaviour has fuelled tensions within the governing coalition that risk slowing the momentum for reform within key State institutions. It is vital that all stakeholders resist the temptation to advance narrow partisan interests, as this could risk reversing many of the gains made since the 2018 elections. I call upon all national

stakeholders, across the political spectrum and within civil society, to work together to continue to lay the foundations for peace, stability and sustainable development.

70. While the vast majority of the Democratic Republic of the Congo is no longer affected by armed conflict, the security situation in the eastern part of the country remains deeply worrying. I am particularly concerned about the continuing violence in Ituri and South Kivu, as well as the enduring threat posed by the ADF in North Kivu. I condemn in the strongest terms the continued attacks on civilians committed by armed groups in the eastern part of the country and call upon them to respond to my call for a global ceasefire and to lay down their weapons.

71. The killing in June of an Indonesian force engineer by presumed members of the ADF is a tragic reminder of the risks that United Nations peacekeepers face every day serving the cause of peace. My heart goes out to the family of the bereaved and to the Government and people of Indonesia. I wish to assure all troop- and police-contributing countries that the United Nations remains firmly committed, in line with its Action for Peacekeeping pledges, to increasing the protection and security of all peacekeeping personnel. I am encouraged by the swift actions taken by the judicial authorities of the Democratic Republic of the Congo with MONUSCO support to ensure that perpetrators of such crimes are prosecuted.

72. I am committed to ensuring that MONUSCO delivers on its core mandated responsibilities. I count on the full support of Security Council members, troop- and police-contributing countries and key regional partners to ensure the timely implementation of the envisaged improvements to the MONUSCO force, including its Intervention Brigade, called for in resolution [2502 \(2019\)](#).

73. At the same time, sustained reform efforts remain essential to enable the security forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to discharge their responsibilities more effectively, in accordance with human rights obligations. For the security sector to serve the interests of society as a whole, these reforms have to be based on a comprehensive national vision. The United Nations, working in conjunction with regional and international partners, stand ready to assist the Government in achieving its goals in this area of vital importance to the future peace and stability of the country.

74. Sustainable approaches to the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of national and foreign armed groups remain crucial to stabilization efforts in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I am therefore encouraged by the progress made by the Governors of Ituri, North Kivu and South Kivu with respect to the development of a disarmament, demobilization and community reinsertion strategy. In this regard, I call upon the Government to support the promising momentum of those provincial efforts and to prioritize the development of a new well-coordinated and coherent national framework in line with the United Nations integrated disarmament, demobilization and reintegration standards.

75. The stabilization of the conflict-affected areas of the country requires a comprehensive approach that goes beyond military solutions and seeks to address the root causes of recurring cycles of intercommunal violence, including access to land and competition for political power and economic resources. To this end, MONUSCO and the United Nations country team will intensify their good offices and provide the authorities of the Democratic Republic of the Congo with the technical support necessary to create a protective environment for civilians, strengthen the rule of law and ensure that perpetrators of serious crimes are brought to justice.

76. I am concerned by the deterioration of the rights situation in conflict-affected provinces, with an increasing number of human rights abuses and violations attributed to armed groups but also to defence and security forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I encourage the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo

to adopt a national transitional justice strategy capable of addressing impunity and providing justice to victims.

77. I congratulate international partners and reiterate my gratitude for their swift and concerted response in support of the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to end the Ebola virus disease in the eastern part of the country. It is important to build on this progress to combat the COVID-19 pandemic in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the re-emergence of Ebola in the western part of the country, which has compounded an already dire humanitarian situation. At this critical time, I call upon all international partners to further enable the implementation of the country's humanitarian response plan, which remains severely under-funded.

78. I am encouraged by the concrete steps taken by the Government to work with MONUSCO to agree on a joint strategy for the transition of the Mission, in accordance with resolution [2502 \(2019\)](#). I remain committed to ensuring that the drawdown and exit of the Mission are carefully sequenced, conditions-based and undertaken in accordance with agreed benchmarks. The development of the joint strategy provides a unique opportunity to define the partnership between the United Nations and the Government that is necessary to ensure that the gradual transition and exit of the Mission preserve the hard-won gains of the past 20 years. As requested by the Security Council, I intend to submit the joint strategy to the Council by 20 October.

79. I wish to thank my Special Representative, Leila Zerrougui, 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 and troop- and police-contributing countries for their continued commitment towards peace and security in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

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