



# Security Council

Seventy-ninth year

*Provisional*

## 9681

st meeting

Monday, 8 July 2024, 10.10 a.m.

New York

*President:* Mr. Nebenzia/Ms. Evstigneeva . . . . . (Russian Federation)

*Members:*

Algeria . . . . .	Mr. Bendjama
China . . . . .	Mr. Geng Shuang
Ecuador . . . . .	Mr. De La Gasca
France . . . . .	Mr. De Rivière
Guyana . . . . .	Ms. Benn
Japan . . . . .	Mrs. Shino
Malta . . . . .	Mrs. Frazier
Mozambique . . . . .	Mr. Afonso
Republic of Korea . . . . .	Mr. Hwang
Sierra Leone . . . . .	Mr. Kanu
Slovenia . . . . .	Mr. Žbogar
Switzerland . . . . .	Mrs. Baeriswyl
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Mr. Eckersley
United States of America . . . . .	Ms. Sullivan

## Agenda

The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (S/2024/482)

Letter date 28 June 2024 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2024/519)

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*The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.*

### **Adoption of the agenda**

*The agenda was adopted.*

### **The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo**

#### **Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (S/2024/482)**

#### **Letter dated 28 June 2024 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2024/519)**

**The President** (*spoke in Russian*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Ms. Bintou Keita, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, to participate in this meeting.

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

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2024/482, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and document S/2024/519, which contains the text of a letter dated 28 June 2024 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council.

I now give the floor to Ms. Keita.

**Ms. Keita** (*spoke in French*): Allow me, first of all, to thank you, Mr. President for this new opportunity to present the Secretary-General's report (S/2024/482) on the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I also welcome the presence of His Excellency Mr. Zenon Mukongo, Permanent Representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in New York, and His Excellency Mr. Ernest Rwamucyo, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Rwanda.

Since my previous briefing, on 27 March 2024 (see S/PV.9590), the political momentum has been focused on the establishment of the new Government, which was inaugurated on the night of 11 to 12 June 2024 following the December 2023 elections. I warmly welcome the appointment of the first woman Prime Minister in the country's history, Judith Suminwa Tuluka. In addition to the Prime Minister, the new Government includes 17 women among the 54 ministers, which represents a clear increase from 27 to 33 per cent in female representation and bears witness to the Head of State's commitment to promoting gender equality in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and to his efforts as the African Union's champion of positive masculinity.

Since the new Government and the National Assembly took office, I have had the opportunity to meet with the Prime Minister, several ministers and the President of the National Assembly. During those exchanges, we were able to discuss the Government's new action plan and the potential ways in which MONUSCO could support its implementation, in line with its mandate.

*(spoke in English)*

Just a few days before the election of the permanent Bureau of the National Assembly, on 19 May, armed elements attacked the residence of Vital Kamerhe, leading to the death of two policemen in charge of his security. The attackers subsequently breached the premises of the Palais de la Nation. Order was quickly restored, with the Congolese security forces arresting over 50 individuals who were subsequently charged with participating in the attacks. I condemn in the strongest terms that attempt to destabilize national institutions.

The security situation in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo has continued to deteriorate, reaching alarming levels of violence and civilian displacement. I am extremely concerned about the rapid expansion of the Mouvement du 23 mars (M23) in North Kivu and the spillover into South Kivu, despite numerous operations conducted by the Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo (FARDC), duly supported by MONUSCO and the Southern African Development Community Mission to the Democratic Republic of the Congo (SAMIDRC). Over the course of the past two weeks, the M23 captured several strategic locations in North Kivu, including the town of Kanyabayonga, on the border between the Lubero and Rutshuru territories. During

their latest military offensive, the M23 and its backers burned several FARDC bases and triggered additional population displacements, further exacerbating an already catastrophic humanitarian and human rights situation. As documented by the Group of Experts, which reports to the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1533 (2004), concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Government of Rwanda has reinforced its support for the M23, enabling it to make major territorial gains across eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. The rapidly escalating M23 crisis carries the very real risk of provoking a wider regional conflict.

In addition to the escalating M23 crisis, a spate of horrific attacks carried out by the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), Zaïre and the Coopérative pour le développement du Congo (CODECO) armed groups in Ituri province caused almost 300 additional victims during the reporting period. Further south, the ADF also entered Lubero territory, in North Kivu, on several occasions, killing an unprecedented number of civilians. Between 4 and 7 June alone, more than 90 people were killed in isolated corners of the territory.

In South Kivu, the M23 crisis also reached Kalehe territory, with indirect fire hitting Minova and other nearby towns, killing and injuring several civilians and generating further displacement. In the southern part of the province, rumours of M23 infiltration of the Hauts Plateaux of Uvira, Fizi and Mwenga have further exacerbated community tensions, which require the urgent attention by Government authorities.

*(spoke in French)*

Against that complex backdrop, MONUSCO continued to support FARDC military operations. Joint operations have contributed to the protection of civilians, in particular in operations against CODECO and the Mayi-Mayi groups in Ituri. MONUSCO has also trained 500 new FARDC recruits as part of a new joint FARDC-MONUSCO Operation Northern Scalpel. Operation Springbok, to defend Goma and Sake, has continued to tackle M23 operations and is ongoing. For its part, the SAMIDRC has continued to deploy and is expected to reach full operational capability by mid-July. I would like to take this opportunity to express my deep condolences to South Africa, which lost two soldiers on 25 June during an M23 mortar attack on its base in Sake. I also wish the wounded a speedy recovery.

*(spoke in English)*

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, we are witnessing one of the most severe, complex and neglected humanitarian crises of our times. The escalating violence in the east continues to trigger massive population displacement, exacerbating an already dreadful humanitarian situation. Overall, there are 7.3 million displaced people in the Democratic Republic of the Congo today, including 6.9 million in the eastern provinces alone. International humanitarian law violations are impeding humanitarian aid delivery. The growing proximity of the front lines and the presence of weapons, including heavy artillery, within and around displacement camps and spontaneous sites significantly compromise the security of the displaced and resident populations. At least 15 bombardments have hit sites hosting internally displaced persons or their immediate surroundings, killing almost 30 people and injuring many more.

What is more, sadly, is that gender-based violence has not stopped increasing. For the whole year of 2023, 122,960 cases of gender-based violence were reported, marking a 3 per cent increase from 2022. Female victims, including girls, accounted for almost 90 per cent of all cases, with incidents of sexual violence against children increasing by 40 per cent. That is just the tip of the iceberg, as many cases remain unreported. On the basis of current trends, the year 2024 sadly risks becoming another record year.

The 2024 humanitarian response plan, launched on 20 February 2024, seeks \$2.6 billion to provide humanitarian assistance to 8.7 million crisis-affected people. As at mid-June, the plan was funded at only 26 per cent. I thank Member States for their support and encourage them to provide additional support. In addition, I also call upon Member States and regional organizations to increase their efforts to reduce humanitarian suffering by strengthening their engagement in political and regional solutions and by recommitting to tackling the root causes of conflict that are driving the dramatic upsurge in humanitarian needs. I welcome the two-week humanitarian truce in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, which began at midnight on 5 July. I urge the parties to use it as an opportunity to inject fresh momentum into ongoing regional peace efforts.

*(spoke in French)*

As requested in resolution 2717 (2023), the Secretary-General submitted a letter (S/2024/519) to the Council identifying the various possible options for supporting the SAMIDRC, whose mandate was endorsed by the Peace and Security Council of the African Union in March. I will not recapitulate the options put before members, but would like to underscore, as stated in the letter, that there will be no military solution to this conflict and that peace will be restored only through lasting political solutions.

I therefore express my gratitude and full support for the ongoing mediation efforts, led by the President of Angola, Mr. João Manuel Gonçalves Lourenço, between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda within the framework of the Luanda process. Those efforts need the full support of the international community. In that regard, I welcome the convening, at the initiative of Angola, of the forthcoming ministerial meeting of the African Union's Peace and Security Council to discuss the situation in the east. Those regional efforts must go hand in hand with mediation initiatives at a provincial and local level aimed at facilitating the disarmament of armed groups in the spirit of the Nairobi process.

As part of the implementation of its mandate, MONUSCO continued to support the Government's disarmament, demobilization and reintegration efforts, particularly in Ituri and certain parts of North Kivu province, and its efforts to reform the security sector. In Lubero, North Kivu, a reintegration project has helped more than 1,800 former combatants. As part of the security sector reform, the Mission supported the establishment of a national body tasked with coordinating security sector reform under the auspices of the Special Adviser to the President of the Republic.

On 25 June, Prime Minister Judith Suminwa Tuluka and I presided over the closing ceremony for MONUSCO operations in South Kivu, which brought to a conclusion more than 20 years of operations in the province. As members may have read in the joint report submitted to the Council, disengagement from South Kivu took place on time thanks to unreserved cooperation between the Congolese authorities and the Mission, who showed courage in tackling the security and logistical challenges they had identified together. I thank the Congolese authorities for their flexibility and pragmatism throughout the process. The joint

evaluation report on the disengagement has taught us important lessons for the process that will be most helpful in the joint planning of forthcoming phases of the process.

Meanwhile, the transition process is proceeding. A roadmap, that is to say, a provincial transition plan for South Kivu province, together with a support plan for the United Nations country team have been finalized. They identify priorities, existing resources and future needs. I encourage Member States to give their full backing, including financial support, to the transition, so that it runs smoothly. I must also underscore the important role played by the Peacebuilding Fund in the transition.

In the context of disengagement and transition, an acceleration of the Disarmament, Demobilization, Community Recovery and Stabilization Programme will require decisive commitment on the part of the authorities in order to convince the armed groups of the need for disarmament, starting with the provinces of Tanganyika, South Kivu, Maniema and Ituri, until the conflict in North Kivu ends, and a longer-term commitment from the Democratic Republic of the Congo's international partners. For its part, the United Nations system remains fully engaged with the authorities to provide coordinated technical and operational support to the programme.

In conclusion, I would like to share with members an excerpt penned by the youth of the Uhuru Knowledge Center as part of a poetry slam. It poignantly captures the perils faced by the youth of North Kivu and attests to the urgent need to support national and international efforts.

"Living in squalor, trudging for miles

"Peace is our quest, but when we rest, it is war that always prevails

"An infernal cycle of flight, and after all the trek, bombs rain down on the displaced in Mugunga

"Trauma and fear have become our companions

"Villages torched, dwellings ablaze, families hearts shattered

"In Kishishe, in Bambo, in Kichanga, in Rubaya, in Kirotsche, in Mugunga, anger is rife

"As time goes by, we live in an impasse, in a spirit of violence

“But it is to the rhythm of justice, peace and reconciliation that we wish to dance here

“They must return to their villages, those millions of children longing to go back to class

“Xenopus of the future, may those children be saved”.

We have an obligation to listen to those Congolese young people and to support them unstintingly, for the sake of the country's future.

**The President** (*spoke in Russian*): I thank Ms. Keita for her briefing.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements.

**Mr. De Rivière** (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank Ms. Keita for her briefing and assure her once again of France's full support.

I have several points to make.

France is deeply concerned by the ongoing escalation of violence in the east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. That violence is fuelling the crisis and violations of international law. France condemns the bombing of the camp for internally displaced persons in Mugunga on 3 May and calls for the whole truth about that incident to be uncovered. We also condemn the attacks that claimed the lives of humanitarian personnel on 1 July.

France welcomes the announcement on 4 July of a two-week truce among the belligerents. That truce should pave the way for a resumption of dialogue with a view to a settlement, within the framework of the Luanda process. All parties must take action to that end. France supports the efforts of the President of Angola. That truce must also allow full humanitarian access.

France condemns the actions of armed groups in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, including the Mouvement du 23 mars (M23), which has continued its offensive since the beginning of the year and extended its control towards the north of North Kivu province. We denounce the pressure placed by the M23 on the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) with the aim of seizing control of certain areas. The 2024 report of the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo (see S/2024/432) highlighted the links maintained by several armed groups with State

actors. France condemns the violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda's military support for the M23 and the growing presence of Rwandan military forces on Congolese territory. Those actions must stop. For its part, the Democratic Republic of the Congo must put an end to the ties maintained between its armed forces and the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda, and we welcome its commitment to demobilize that group's combatants.

France welcomes the deployment of the Southern African Development Community Mission to the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We took note of the Secretary-General's recommendations for strengthening cooperation between MONUSCO and that regional force. A draft text to that effect will be submitted soon by my delegation to the members of the Security Council. France also calls upon regional forces to strengthen their coordination with MONUSCO.

We welcome the work of the Group of Experts established pursuant to resolution 1533 (2004) and the renewal of the sanctions regime. We recall that the arms embargo on the Democratic Republic of the Congo targets only armed groups and no longer concerns the Congolese authorities or regional partner forces.

MONUSCO continues to play a key role. The joint report from the United Nations and the Congolese authorities is clear on the challenges encountered during the withdrawal from South Kivu. The conditions that made that withdrawal possible are not yet in place in North Kivu and Ituri. France welcomes the Congolese Government's determination to consolidate the transfer of responsibility in South Kivu before moving on to the next stages. We have full confidence in the Congolese Government's as it continues its cooperation with the United Nations.

**Mr. De La Gasca** (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), Ms. Bintou Keita, for her briefing.

I also acknowledge the presence of the representatives of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda at this meeting, and we respectfully call on them to do everything necessary, in good faith, to support efforts aimed at establishing a constructive dialogue.

The appointment of Ms. Judith Suminwa Tuluka as the first woman Prime Minister of the Democratic Republic of the Congo is a historic milestone that should be highlighted, as it promotes the participation of women in decision-making positions. She is joined by another 17 women as part of the Government. That must continue to be bolstered, as the representation of women at decision-making levels is a vital component of more inclusive, safe and peaceful societies and an institutional and democratic demonstration of the effort to combat violence against women and other vulnerable groups.

The violence perpetrated by the Mouvement du 23 mars (M23) in North Kivu is worrisome, as is the spread of that violence into parts of South Kivu as MONUSCO withdraws from that area. That situation confirms that the Democratic Republic of the Congo needs to collaborate with MONUSCO on the implementation of the Mission's withdrawal plan, in support of establishing Government control over the entire territory. With regard to the deteriorating security situation, it is worth recalling the clear message sent by the Security Council last month that foreign military support to the M23 and to certain armed groups, such as the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda, must cease immediately.

Ecuador acknowledges the diplomatic mediation efforts, led by the Government of Angola, between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda. It is plausible that the Government and various armed groups in the province of Ituri will conclude an agreement on the cessation of hostilities, and Ecuador encourages the Government to continue addressing the causes of intercommunal tensions and to implement the agreement within the framework of the Disarmament, Demobilization, Community Recovery and Stabilization Programme.

The most heinous practices and crimes recorded in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, including gender-based sexual violence and grave violations against children, cannot go unpunished. In that context, I highlight MONUSCO's work to uphold its commitment to ending the recruitment and use of children in armed groups, and its work on strengthening the judicial sector through the implementation of the United Nations Joint Justice Reform Support Programme and technical and financial cooperation on combating impunity for crimes against humanity.

The humanitarian situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo remains critical, with more than 7 million internally displaced persons and close to 400,000 returnees in 2024. That makes it one of the largest crises in the world, forcing the international community to respond accordingly to those pressing needs. In that context, we welcome the humanitarian truce that was agreed to in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and that was attained with the good offices of the United States and the support of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda. We call upon the parties to adhere to that agreement.

Ecuador considers that the deployment of the Southern African Development Community Mission to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which is backed by the African Union, is a sign of regional backing for peace and stabilization in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The Security Council should support that, just as it should support any regional, bilateral and international initiative that, in a coordinated manner, supports the Democratic Republic of the Congo in the consolidation of peace and political stability.

Finally, we reiterate that only dialogue and peaceful means will lead to sustainable peace; hence the need for the Nairobi and Luanda processes to continue, as they have become key elements of the architecture of peace in the region.

**Mr. Eckersley (United Kingdom):** We welcome the representatives of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda to the Chamber. I would like to start by thanking the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for her hard work and that of her team under exceptionally challenging circumstances and for her briefing today.

First, the United Kingdom is encouraged by the two-week humanitarian truce that has been announced, particularly given the worrisome recent intensification of violence in North Kivu, including the fall of Kanyabayonga to the United Nations-sanctioned group Mouvement du 23 mars. We call on all parties to the conflict to uphold the truce. We hope that that will support the journey to lasting peace. We also welcome discussions between representatives of Governments from the region to reinvigorate the Luanda and Nairobi processes, and we underline that a political solution to the conflict remains essential.

The United Kingdom strongly condemns attacks on humanitarian workers, including a recent attack in

Butembo, which killed two aid workers working for the British non-governmental organization Tearfund. Targeting humanitarian actors is unjustifiable. We recall the inviolability of civilian camps, and we express our serious concern about civilian lives being endangered by the positioning of heavy artillery near internally displaced persons camps. We are also deeply concerned by attacks on areas known to be heavily populated by civilians, and we deplore ongoing reports of sexual and gender-based violence.

Secondly, the United Kingdom continues to call for the transition of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) to be responsible and carefully considered to ensure that the Democratic Republic of the Congo authorities are in a position to assume responsibilities and avoid a security vacuum. We encourage MONUSCO to implement lessons learned from its withdrawal from South Kivu as it looks ahead to subsequent phases of disengagement from North Kivu and Ituri where conditions for civilians are already dire. We further encourage MONUSCO and the Democratic Republic of the Congo Government to collaborate closely on a strategy for the protection of civilians that focuses on strong political and community engagement.

Thirdly, the United Kingdom takes note of the Secretary-General's letter (S/2024/519) on options for potential support for the Southern African Development Community Mission to the Democratic Republic of the Congo (SAMIDRC). It is important that any support not impede MONUSCO's ability to deliver its current mandate. This is a dangerous moment for MONUSCO and its peacekeeping personnel. MONUSCO must avoid being drawn into an escalating regional conflict.

That is why any support to the SAMIDRC should be both anchored in the Luanda and Nairobi political processes and implemented in accordance with the United Nations Human Rights Due Diligence Policy on support to non-United Nations security forces. Continual review against those criteria will be critical to any support we give.

**Mr. Kanu** (Sierra Leone): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the members of the three African members of the Security Council, namely, Algeria, Mozambique and my own country, Sierra Leone, plus Guyana (A3+).

We thank Ms. Bintou Keita, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Democratic Republic of

the Congo and Head of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) for her comprehensive briefing. We take note of the report of the Secretary-General for the period 20 March to 19 June (S/2024/482). The A3+ recognizes the critical work the United Nations is carrying out in an extremely fragile complex environment and under difficult circumstances. We express our support for the work of MONUSCO and call on the concerned parties to cease all attacks against the Mission. We seize this opportunity to congratulate His Excellency President Félix-Antoine Tshisekedi Tshilombo and his Government on the appointment of the first female Prime Minister, as well as the appointment of 17 women in the Cabinet. We convey our best wishes to the people and the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We welcome the participation of the representatives of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda in this meeting.

The people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo have suffered a prolonged misery. For three decades, eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo has been a battleground for a conflict with deep and tangled roots.

We are alarmed about the deteriorating security situation in North Kivu, South Kivu and Ituri and are especially concerned about the risks to the protection of civilians posed by that problem. Violence linked to armed group activities, including the Mouvement du 23 mars (M23), the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR) and the Coopérative pour le développement du Congo (CODECO), continue to inflict a heavy toll on civilians, including women and children. We are concerned about the risks posed to civilians in internally displaced persons camps and call on all parties to ensure the protection of civilians in keeping with the provisions of international law, including international humanitarian law. We condemn all attacks, including bombings, of camps of displaced persons. We are gravely concerned about attacks on critical infrastructure, including the Goma airport, and attacks on MONUSCO peacekeepers and assets.

The people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo have long suffered, and it is high time the conflict be resolved. Regrettably, however, there are no signs of improvement since the Security Council last met to discuss this file (see S/PV.9590). The Congolese people

must no longer continue to suffer the atrocities of the armed groups in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

In the light of the situation on the ground, the A3+ would like to make the following points.

First, we strongly condemn the resurgence in fighting, in particular around Kanyabayonga in North Kivu province. If the fighting persists, there is a risk of regional spillover in the Great Lakes region with devastating consequences. The trials the Congolese people go through and the trauma caused by the M23, ADF, CODECO, FDLR and other groups are unacceptable. We call on all armed groups operating in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo to cease their attacks on civilians and withdraw from occupied territories and give civilians, including internally displaced persons, the much-needed respite they deserve. The principles of international humanitarian law must be respected by all parties.

Secondly, we reiterate our support for regional talks and processes. We applaud the efforts of His Excellency João Lourenço, President of Angola, for his relentless efforts in keeping the Luanda process alive and for working towards peace and stability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In the same vein, efforts to complement the Luanda and Nairobi processes with the aim of encouraging political dialogue at the regional level and de-escalating tensions should be supported. We call on all stakeholders to renew their commitment to the success of those processes. Additionally, we are supportive of the African Union Peace and Security Council communiqué endorsing the deployment of the Southern African Development Community Mission to the Democratic Republic of the Congo (SAMIDRC) and echo the calls of the Southern African Development Community and the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo for United Nations support to the SAMIDRC, in line with resolution 2717 (2023).

The A3+ has also taken note of MONUSCO's withdrawal from South Kivu in line with the comprehensive disengagement plan. We continue to urge respect for the wishes of the Congolese people while at the same time stressing the importance of a responsible, gradual and sustainable withdrawal. We look forward to receiving the proposals for the next steps of the withdrawal. In that context, we thank the Secretary-General for his proposed options for United Nations support to the SAMIDRC. Members of the A3+ are considering the options thoroughly and are prepared

to engage with fellow Council members to chart the best path forward, in keeping with the interests of the Congolese Government and people who have borne the brunt of the conflict for decades. We stress that the unity of Council members is a moral imperative in order to ensure that the SAMIDRC receives the support it needs for peace and stability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Thirdly, we need to address the alarming humanitarian situation in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, particularly through the provision of adequate funding. Living conditions in displaced persons camps were already deteriorating, with the Democratic Republic of the Congo categorized as having one of the worst displacement crises in the world. Continued armed group activities, including the offensive by the M23, will only continue to exacerbate the humanitarian consequences for the more than 6 million people who have been displaced from their homes and communities. Women and children are suffering the brunt of the deteriorating humanitarian situation and will continue to pay the highest price in the conflict if nothing is done to bring the conflict to an end. We have seen, for example, the continued grave violations against children and the additional cases of sexual exploitation and abuse recorded during the reporting period. The A3+ urges full accountability for those violations.

Equally important is the timely delivery of humanitarian assistance. However, the delivery of humanitarian aid requires the protection of humanitarian convoys and personnel in line with international humanitarian law. Parties to the conflict must show restraint and adhere to their obligations and refrain from targeting civilians and civilian infrastructure. We must respond in a timely manner to the urgent humanitarian needs of displaced persons and ensure they have access to basic services.

Finally, the recruitment of children into armed groups not only violates international law and instruments, such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict, but also perpetuates cycles of violence and the exploitation of children. It is essential for all parties involved, including State actors, armed groups and other stakeholders, to be held accountable for their actions and to face justice for their role in recruiting and using children in conflict. By upholding accountability and addressing the root causes

of child recruitment, the Democratic Republic of the Congo can move towards a more just and sustainable future for its children and community.

In conclusion, the members of the A3+ urge the international community, in particular the Security Council, to pursue a comprehensive approach in tackling the root causes of the Congolese conflict. We urge all actors to respect the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and condemn all such violations, including the illegal mining of its natural resources.

We are committed to supporting the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and its people. Achieving peace and stability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the wider Great Lakes region is of high importance to the African continent.

**Ms. Sullivan** (United States of America): I thank Special Representative Keita for her briefing today and for her steady leadership of United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO). We also welcome the representatives of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda today.

The United States strongly commends all parties to the conflict in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo for committing to a two-week humanitarian truce that began 5 July. We thank Angola for its partnership in reaching that truce, and we will cooperate with Angola to monitor and verify it. We also thank MONUSCO for its support to this overall effort. These regional diplomatic efforts are the way to achieve permanent solutions and a lasting peace for the long-suffering communities of the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The United States further commends MONUSCO for safely completing its drawdown from South Kivu, in line with its mandate and the joint disengagement plan agreed by the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the United Nations. We extend our gratitude to the United Nations personnel who have served in South Kivu and offered protection and support to its inhabitants over the past 20 years.

With phase one of the disengagement complete, we are troubled by the impact on civilian protection and humanitarian access. We are also concerned that the Democratic Republic of the Congo's security forces have struggled to effectively deploy into and maintain

the positions that MONUSCO occupied. We urge the United Nations and the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to anticipate and address those challenges in future phases of MONUSCO's disengagement so as to avoid consequences for civilians, such as the consequences we have seen in South Kivu. We are appalled by the surging number and lethality of attacks in Ituri province by the armed group Cooperative for Development of the Congo.

In addition, the Allied Democratic Forces, affiliated with the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham, killed more civilians in June 2024 than in any previous month. These despicable acts of violence would undoubtedly have been more grave without MONUSCO's interventions, further underlining the significant contributions the Mission continues to make to security and the protection of civilians in these provinces. Amid such instability and violence and recognizing the critical role MONUSCO plays in defending population centres and facilitating humanitarian access, the Council should not in good conscience support the Mission's departure from North Kivu or Ituri until more progress is made to de-escalate the ongoing conflict.

We were outraged by threats and obstructions by the Movement du 23 mars (M23) and the Alliance Fleuve Congo against MONUSCO positions, supply routes, and movements in North Kivu. It is irresponsible for Rwanda, as a major troop-contributing country to United Nations peacekeeping, to tolerate such behaviour by the M23. We reiterate our call for Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo to engage through the Luanda process to find a mutually agreeable pathway towards de-escalation.

The United States stands ready to support efforts towards a resolution to the conflict. Such a resolution is critical for the security of the people of the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo; the ability of the Congolese to secure, govern and develop the eastern provinces; and for Rwanda to ensure its internal security and focus on its role as a security exporter.

We are alarmed by the rapid escalation of the conflict in recent months. According to credible reporting, Rwanda's military interventions and operations in North Kivu have extended beyond mere support for M23 operations to direct and decisive involvement, allowing Rwandan troops and the M23 to achieve military dominance across large swaths of North Kivu and greatly increase their territorial expansion.

Rwandan troops number upwards of 4,000 on the Democratic Republic of the Congo soil and have committed attacks that killed civilians, including the 3 May attack on the Mugunga internally displaced persons (IDPs) camp, which killed dozens and wounded many more. All parties in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo must take every precaution to protect civilian populations, especially those in IDP sites, including by removing artillery and other heavy weapons in the vicinity of such locations. The more than 2.5 million people displaced by the M23 and the Rwanda Defence Force have endured untold suffering and — at a minimum — deserve physical protection from violence.

The United States recognizes the role and sacrifices of the Southern African Development Community Mission to the Democratic Republic of the Congo (SAMIDRC) in supporting the Government's efforts to defend its territorial integrity. The primary goal of the United States in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo is to support a de-escalation of the conflict and to put an end to the instability and human suffering that the conflict has caused. That is why we believe that the Council should guard against steps that could further inflame regional tensions, including extending significant MONUSCO support to the SAMIDRC.

We are concerned that extensive MONUSCO support to the SAMIDRC may not reflect our shared interest in securing a political solution to the conflict. That is why we support the Council's authorizing only limited MONUSCO support to the SAMIDRC within its area of deployment, in furtherance of its mandate, without prejudice to its tasks and within existing resources.

Finally, Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo must urgently take immediate steps to de-escalate, fully commit to regional diplomatic processes and work to hold accountable all actors responsible for human rights abuses — steps that represent the only hope for peace.

**Mr. Geng Shuang** (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Special Representative Bintou Keita for her briefing. I welcome the presence of the Permanent Representatives of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda.

Last month, the new Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo was inaugurated smoothly, unveiling a new chapter in the country's governance.

China welcomes that. We look forward to all parties in the country uniting as one and accelerating nation-building with the Government's national action plan as the blueprint to achieve peace and stability.

In the light of the Secretary-General's report (S/2024/482), I wish to stress three points.

First, we must push for the cessation of fighting in order to end the violence among armed groups. In the past three months alone, more than 500 civilians were killed by armed groups and 7.3 million were forcibly displaced. On 3 July, a private Chinese company located in the Democratic Republic of the Congo was attacked, causing several deaths and leading to the disappearance of Chinese citizens. China strongly condemns that act, and we call for the perpetrators to be immediately arrested and held accountable before the law.

China urges all armed groups located in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to lay down weapons and withdraw from occupied areas immediately. In April, the Democratic Republic of the Congo Government concluded ceasefire agreements with multiple armed groups and engaged in bilateral security cooperation with Uganda and Burundi. A pilot disarmament, demobilization and reintegration project in North Kivu was also completed. Such progress deserves full recognition. The international community must respect the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and assist constructively in its efforts to maintain security and stability and improve the humanitarian situation, in order to promote an early settlement of the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo issue.

Secondly, we must facilitate an immediate regional de-escalation. There has been growing divergence and discord among countries of the region on the issue of the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. In his report, the Secretary-General expressed his concern over the risk of a regionalization of the conflict in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. China calls on the countries concerned to remain calm and exercise restraint and settle differences through dialogue rather than military means. We commend Angola for facilitating the meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda last March. We encourage countries and organizations of the region to play a bigger part in advancing the Luanda and Nairobi processes. We hope that Special Representative of the Secretary-General Keita can

maintain coordination with Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region Xia Huang to continue to work for peace talks.

Thirdly, there must be orderly progress in the drawdown process of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO). The Mission successfully withdrew from South Kivu last month. Going forward, the United Nations system should assist peacebuilding and consolidation efforts in South Kivu. MONUSCO needs to stay engaged with the Democratic Republic of the Congo Government to ensure a safe and orderly drawdown process. A string of recent attacks against MONUSCO calls for a greater sense of urgency and more effective measures by the relevant actors to ensure the safety of peacekeepers. The Southern African Development Community is engaged in peacekeeping activities in the eastern provinces. We support a reasonable adjustment of MONUSCO's mandate to ensure its coordination and complementarity with regional forces. We are ready to participate constructively in the Council's deliberations on to support forces in the region.

**Mr. Žbogar** (Slovenia): I thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Keita for her briefing today and appreciate her dedicated work. We fully support the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) and commend the troop- and police-contributing countries. I welcome the representatives of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda to today's meeting.

Since our previous meeting (see S/PV.9590), the security and humanitarian situation in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo has deteriorated considerably. We are deeply troubled by escalating violence, including intensified confrontations involving the Mouvement du 23 mars (M23), the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR) and Wazalendo, as well as deadly attacks by the Coopérative pour le développement du Congo, Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), Zaïre and other armed groups. The unprecedented territorial expansion of the M23, the expansion of the ADF and the significant increase in civilian casualties are alarming. We urge the M23 and all other armed groups to immediately cease hostilities and withdraw from occupied territories. We welcome the announced two-week humanitarian truce and urge all parties to fully respect and implement it.

I would like to highlight three points.

First, we remind all parties of their obligation to respect international humanitarian and human rights law. The conflict has led to appalling levels of sexual violence, including in and around internally displaced persons (IDP) sites, and to the recruitment and use of children and other grave violations against them. We strongly condemn the more than 170 attacks on aid workers this year alone, as well as continued attacks on peacekeepers. The escalating use of heavy artillery near IDP camps is alarming and we condemn it. Accountability for those endangering civilians through such reckless tactics must be ensured. We furthermore call for accountability for sexual violence, sexual exploitation and sexual slavery, which disproportionately affects displaced women and girls. All States must end any support to armed groups. We are alarmed by external support to the M23 and unauthorized foreign military personnel in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Sovereignty and territorial integrity are basic principles of international law, and they must be respected. We urge Rwanda to fully and immediately withdraw its military from the Democratic Republic of the Congo. There is concern about reports indicating that, despite directives to prohibit cooperation with the FDLR, some Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo elements continue to engage with the FDLR. We again urge all parties to end support for all armed groups.

Secondly, we note the completion of the withdrawal of MONUSCO from South Kivu, marking the end of the first phase of its disengagement from the country. Given the escalating security situation, the continued withdrawal of MONUSCO requires careful and strategic planning. A safe, responsible, gradual and sustainable withdrawal remains essential, with a focus on the ongoing and strong partnership between the Democratic Republic of the Congo Government and the United Nations, including the Security Council, as well as regional partners. There is ongoing concern about the possible impact of the withdrawal on the protection of civilians, especially in the light of massive displacement. We recall that the primary responsibility for the protection of civilians lies with the Government. In regions where civilians, including IDPs, depend on MONUSCO, protection against armed groups, coordinating the deployment of Congolese security forces with the Mission's withdrawal is vital.

Thirdly, we are deeply concerned about the conflict escalating into a wider regional crisis, as highlighted by

the Secretary-General in his report (S/2024/482). Special Representative of the Secretary-General Keita warned just now that there is a real risk of regional conflict. We support regional efforts to promote peace and stability. We commend President João Manuel Gonçalves Lourenço of Angola for revitalizing the Luanda process and facilitating recent diplomatic engagements with the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda, and we urge Presidents Félix-Antoine Tshisekedi Tshilombo and Paul Kagame to engage in inclusive political dialogue. We note the nearly completed deployment of the Southern African Development Community Mission and stress the importance of effective coordination between MONUSCO and regional forces for protecting civilians and peacekeepers. We also note the Secretary-General's letter of 28 June (S/2024/519) outlining options for possible support for regional forces. Any support must strictly comply with the United Nations Human Rights Due Diligence Policy and the African Union's compliance framework.

In conclusion, there is one clear and united message coming from this Chamber repeatedly — there is no military solution to the conflict. We urge all parties involved to heed that message from the Council loud and clear. Slovenia remains steadfast in supporting efforts to end the conflict. We will continue to support peace initiatives and regional cooperation to ensure a sustainable resolution.

**Mrs. Frazier (Malta):** I would like to thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Keita for her update, and I welcome the representatives of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda to the Chamber.

The Council recently adopted a press statement (SC/15739) that expresses strong condemnation of foreign military support for the Mouvement du 23 mars (M23) and any other armed group operating in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We demanded the cessation of such support, while reaffirming the Democratic Republic of the Congo's sovereignty and territorial integrity. We also condemned attacks conducted by the Allied Democratic Forces, all attacks against the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) and the unacceptable threats made by the M23 against the Mission. Malta strongly reaffirms those messages today.

We welcome the final report issued by the Group of Experts (see S/2024/432). Their work remains valuable in order to identify the complex dynamics in the region, including the responsibilities of armed groups and national States. As MONUSCO has completed its withdrawal from South Kivu, security spillovers from North Kivu are affecting the south. Half a million internally displaced persons recently moved to South Kivu to escape the brutality of war in the north. We are concerned that Twirwaneho operatives in South Kivu are committing grave violations against children with persistent recruitment, also in collaboration with the M23. We encourage the Congolese authorities to spare no efforts in ensuring a sufficient military presence in the region and to prevent bases from falling into the hands of armed groups.

We take note of the Secretary-General's letter (S/2024/519), proposing options for MONUSCO support to the Southern African Development Community Mission to the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Malta recalls that any logistical and operational support should be consistent with paragraph 20 of resolution 2717 (2023). We also recall that any such support should be in strict compliance with the United Nations Human Rights Due Diligence Policy, and we stress the importance of the protection of civilians, close coordination and information sharing.

On the political front, we echo the Secretary-General in condemning the events of 19 May, namely, the attempt to destabilize democratic institutions in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Those responsible for such acts must be held accountable.

On a positive note, Malta welcomes the appointment of the first female Prime Minister, along with 17 women, to the Government. This marks a milestone in promoting the meaningful participation of women in leadership positions, and we hope it serves as a model for others.

I take this opportunity to commend Angola for its efforts to de-escalate regional tensions and conflicts. We hope that the leaders of the countries concerned return to the negotiating table.

Many root causes of conflict still need to be addressed. It remains an international responsibility to ensure that illegally extracted mineral resources from the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo are not integrated into the international market. We are concerned that Rubaya, the region from where

half of the national production of coltan originates, is now under M23 control. Information indicates that production continues at high levels, while miners and local traders are being forced to sell the ore to M23-linked traders.

Meanwhile, an unabated humanitarian catastrophe continues to unfold in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. We condemn the attacks against the Mugunga camp on 3 May, as internally displaced persons are confronted daily by the risks of open conflict. We welcome the announcement of a two-week humanitarian truce and hope that it will bring relief to communities caught in the conflict.

We demand that all violations of international humanitarian law and violations and abuses of human rights end immediately. Those include gender-based violence and sexual violence in conflict, the recruitment, use and abduction of children and attacks against schools and hospitals. Malta continues to advocate for a more significant presence of child protection advisers in South Kivu, in line with resolution 2717 (2023).

**Mr. Hwang** (Republic of Korea): I thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ms. Bintou Keita, for her informative briefing. I also welcome the representatives of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda to today's meeting.

At the outset, the Republic of Korea underscores the Security Council's press statement (SC/15739) on the Democratic Republic of the Congo issued on 20 June. Through the press statement, the Council condemned attacks in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, expressed concern about their impact, called for diplomatic dialogue towards de-escalation and reaffirmed its commitment to the Democratic Republic of the Congo's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity.

In that connection, we welcome the two-week humanitarian truce between the parties to the conflict in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, which began last Friday. Korea sincerely hopes that the truce will prevent the risk of an imminent, fully fledged regionalization and escalation of the conflict and will serve as the starting point for a lasting, peaceful and sustainable solution to the protracted conflict in the region.

Against that backdrop, I would like to underline four points.

First, the territorial expansion of armed groups is deeply alarming, and Korea strongly condemns the Mouvement du 23 mars (M23) and urges it to fully withdraw from all occupied areas and adhere to the Luanda road map. Continued attacks on, and the proliferation of weapons at, displacement sites that led to attacks in early May on the internally displaced persons camps in Lac Vert and Muganga are equally distressing. Recent reports by the Democratic Republic of the Congo Group of Experts about direct foreign military interventions on Democratic Republic of the Congo territory also raise serious concerns. Foreign military support to armed groups not only intensifies the regionalization of the conflict, but it also destabilizes the security of the country providing support, and it must therefore cease immediately. The Security Council should continue to be vigilant on that matter.

Secondly, we welcome the timely withdrawal of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) from South Kivu and commend the efforts of the United Nations country team to tailor its support to the transition process. Long-term stability requires relevant peacebuilding efforts — a fact borne out by the South Kivu transition road map — including the protection of civilians and security, the reinforcement of State authority and support for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme. In that regard, we very much welcome the development of a new programme for social cohesion and community violence reduction in South Kivu by the United Nations Population Fund, which will be supported by the Peacebuilding Fund. Korea has nearly doubled its contribution to the Peacebuilding Fund to \$8 million this year and will continue to support its activities. At the same time, given the intensifying conflict in North Kivu and its spillover into South Kivu, preserving MONUSCO's achievements is crucial. Future disengagement plans should be examined prudently for a gradual, responsible and sustainable withdrawal of MONUSCO, while consolidating the overall transition.

Thirdly, we take note of the Secretary-General's letter (S/2024/519) to the Security Council, presenting options for MONUSCO and United Nations support to regional forces in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Regional peace processes are crucial for de-escalation and peaceful conflict resolution. Regional forces, such as the Southern African Development Community Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo,

deployed in connection with those regional processes, could serve as a tool to create an environment conducive to a political solution. However, any such United Nations support to regional forces should comply strictly with the United Nations Human Rights Due Diligence Policy. Regional forces should also ensure the highest standards of conduct, discipline and transparency under a robust compliance framework.

Fourthly, the dire human rights and humanitarian situation demands urgent attention. The Democratic Republic of the Congo faces one of the world's largest displacement crises, with over 7.3 million people displaced. Human rights abuses, including ethnic reprisals and increasing grave violations against children and gender-based violence, which are reverting to their worst levels, bring only more suffering to innocent civilians. We urge all parties to adhere to international humanitarian and human rights law and ensure unimpeded humanitarian access. Korea plans to make a significant contribution this year to address the Democratic Republic of the Congo's humanitarian funding gap.

In conclusion, the Republic of Korea reiterates its unwavering support for Special Representative of the Secretary-General Keita, MONUSCO and regional organizations in their efforts to bring lasting peace and stability to the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

**Mrs. Shino** (Japan): I would like to express my gratitude to Special Representative of the Secretary-General Keita for her briefing. I welcome the participation of the representatives of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda.

The attacks in May against the Presidential Palace and the residence of the former Democratic Republic of the Congo's Deputy Prime Minister for the Economy in Kinshasa are of grave concern to us. We strongly condemn those acts, and the assailants must be held accountable.

We are also worried about ongoing incidents causing a number of victims, especially in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. The horrifying incident of the shelling of internally displaced persons camps in the same month is another consequence of the continued heavy fighting between the Mouvement du 23 mars (M23), the Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo and other armed groups. We strongly condemn such attacks. The victims, including women and children, are in the most vulnerable condition,

having fled human rights violations and abuses to gain shelter in the camps. The increased offensive by armed groups, including the M23, is devastating the lives of local people and threatening human security. They must immediately cease hostilities and lay down their arms. In that context, Japan welcomes the recently reached agreement on a two-week truce. We sincerely hope that it will be fully implemented.

The shelling incident by the M23 again shows the presence of heavy weaponry in close proximity to the civilian population. Crossfire in the vicinity makes humanitarian access to internally displaced persons camps impossible, and people in need face increased risk of abuse, including sexual violence. Actions must be taken to prevent another case involving civilian casualties. We reiterate the utmost importance of respecting human rights and upholding applicable obligations under international humanitarian law.

The reported large quantities of sophisticated artillery brought from outside and the presence of disguised foreign troops remain deeply concerning. Ongoing support of any kind provided by any States to the M23 and any other armed groups must be stopped immediately. The continuation of such support is bringing the region to the verge of all-out conflict. It is essential to preserve the sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

We continue to support ongoing national and regional initiatives to overcome differences, alleviate tensions among stakeholders and seek sustainable solutions through inclusive dialogue. The Government-led agreement to cease hostilities among several armed groups in Ituri should be reinforced by security and confidence-building measures, including the implementation of the Disarmament, Demobilization, Community Recovery and Stabilization Programme.

Angola has been playing a commendable role in the mediation between Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The Luanda process needs to be observed by all parties in a sincere manner, and we call for any actions that risk derailing it to be avoided. The Southern African Development Community Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (SAMIDRC) has been trying to help build an environment conducive to the implementation of regional initiatives. Any possible assistance to the SAMIDRC by the United Nations should be provided in strict compliance with the

United Nations Human Rights Due Diligence Policy, as stressed in the Secretary-General's letter (S/2024/519) on possible options.

We have received the joint report on the first phase of MONUSCO's disengagement. A further gradual, responsible and sustainable withdrawal requires a synchronized deployment of adequate national security forces to ensure the protection of civilians. We continue to encourage the Democratic Republic of the Congo to promote its nationally owned security sector reform with necessary budgetary measures, under the leadership of the newly formed Government. Japan continues to support the Government's efforts to develop community policing through capacity- and institution-building aimed at promoting the rule of law. Japan will continue working together with all partners for sustainable peace and stability in the region.

**Mrs. Baeriswyl** (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): I thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ms. Bintou Keita, for her briefing, which included the touching slam poem by a young person, and for all the work accomplished by the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO). I welcome the presence of the representatives of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda at this meeting. I also join my colleagues in congratulating the Democratic Republic of the Congo on the formation of its new Government, including the appointment of the country's first woman Prime Minister.

Now that MONUSCO's disengagement from South Kivu has been completed, and security conditions in the east remain unstable, the Democratic Republic of the Congo is at a decisive crossroads for the lasting restoration of peace on its territory. In order to ease tensions and ensure the protection of civilians, three aspects are particularly important.

First, only a political solution based on dialogue and mutual respect can lead to lasting peace and security in the region. As mentioned today by the Special Representative, the intensification of tensions between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda represents a real risk of regional escalation and worsening of the conflict. In that context, we welcome the political initiatives that are under way and encourage Presidents Tshisekedi Tshilombo and Kagame to meet as soon as possible to engage in a sincere and constructive dialogue. We welcome the efforts of the United States,

which led to the establishment of a humanitarian truce in the east, and we hope that that truce will lead to a permanent ceasefire.

Furthermore, in order to restore confidence, it is crucial that all States in the region uphold their commitments. In that respect, the continued advance of the Rwanda Defence Force and the Mouvement du 23 mars (M23) in the east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, especially the recent occupation of several localities in Lubero territory, is unacceptable. That advance constitutes a violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We urge Rwanda to cease all support for the M23 immediately and to withdraw from Congolese territory. Likewise, we call on the Forces armées de la république démocratique du Congo to honour their commitments and cease all support for the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda.

Secondly, no lasting peace dialogue can succeed if the parties continue to violate international law. Switzerland remains concerned by the increase in attacks on civilians, child recruitment and conflict-related sexual violence in all areas affected by the conflict. The parties must take concrete measures to protect the civilian population. In accordance with international humanitarian law, the parties must especially avoid placing military objects in or near densely populated areas. Civilians and internally displaced persons sites must never be targeted. We also unequivocally condemn all attacks on MONUSCO and humanitarian personnel. Indeed, States and parties to conflicts have an obligation to respect and protect humanitarian and United Nations personnel, including local staff, as recalled by resolution 2730 (2024), adopted in May at the initiative of my country.

Thirdly, while MONUSCO has completed its withdrawal from South Kivu, we are concerned by the security challenges that remain after the disengagement. Switzerland encourages the Democratic Republic of the Congo to take over and ensure that security gaps are filled, notably through the deployment of security forces. Furthermore, it is essential that those protection challenges be taken into account in the next stages of disengagement.

Finally, any MONUSCO support for regional forces must be undertaken with the understanding that peace and security can be achieved only through sustainable political solutions. It must be conditioned on robust

application of the United Nations Human Rights Due Diligence Policy and support for ensuring adherence to the African Union's compliance framework, in line with resolution 2717 (2023). From an operational point of view, any support must be accompanied by an approach focused on the protection of civilians and by effective coordination and information-sharing.

Switzerland remains committed to finding a political solution to the crisis in the east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We reaffirm our readiness to support diplomatic efforts and peace talks. We call on Council members to speak with one voice in order to ensure that those efforts become a reality and lead to a de-escalation of the conflict.

**The President** (*spoke in Russian*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of the Russian Federation.

We thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ms. Bintou Keita, for her briefing. We welcome the participation of the representatives of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda in this meeting.

We are deeply concerned about the escalation of the situation in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, in connection with the resumption of the offensive by the Mouvement du 23 mars militia and the increased activity of other illegal armed groups against that backdrop.

We are obliged to reiterate that the ongoing military conflict in North Kivu is the principal cause of the deterioration of the humanitarian situation. The number of internally displaced persons in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is currently approaching 7.5 million. The use and placement of heavy weapons near civilian objects has led to increased civilian suffering and a significant increase in the number of killed and wounded. The shelling of settlements and internally displaced persons camps must stop. We are also gravely concerned about the use of advanced weapons systems in the area of hostilities.

It is necessary to prevent further deterioration of the situation, which could have serious consequences for the entire Great Lakes region. The problems in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo are deep-seated and require balanced and long-term responses that take into account the fundamental interests of all parties concerned. We are convinced that only political

solutions can lead to the establishment of conditions for lasting stabilization. We call for a cessation of hostilities and the full implementation of the agreements under the Luanda process. That should be facilitated by increased regional diplomatic efforts and mediation between Kinshasa and Kigali. It is clear that progress on that track will be achieved only if State engagement with illegal armed groups ceases.

We often hear in the Security Council about a conflict becoming forgotten owing to an escalation in other parts of the world. The crisis in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is one of the world's oldest, with a bloody history and unprecedented casualties. Unfortunately, diplomatic efforts to date have yielded very limited results. We urge the countries with political and economic interests in the region and influence on the main actors to put the interests of the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo first. Destructive external interference in the affairs of the Democratic Republic of the Congo affairs is unacceptable. We are also confident that much depends on Kinshasa's effective efforts to stabilize the country, to strengthen the accountability of the security sector and State control throughout all regions, as well as its efforts to resolve intercommunal conflicts by launching an inclusive inter-ethnic dialogue.

We support the efforts of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) and its leadership. The Mission's presence in the conflict zone is an important stabilizing factor. At the same time, we recognize that there are some natural historical and political constraints on its work. We call for lessons to be drawn from its successes and failures as soon as possible and in the most impartial manner. We unequivocally condemn attacks and violence against the Blue Helmets.

We note the completion of MONUSCO's withdrawal from South Kivu. That is an extremely important milestone for the Mission and for many years of peacekeeping efforts in the Democratic Republic of the Congo under the auspices of the United Nations. The experience gained in the implementation of that phase should prove useful for subsequent phases.

While determining the next steps to take in organizing MONUSCO's withdrawal from the country, it is important to take into consideration the evolution of the situation on the ground and to act in a flexible,

gradual and responsible manner. It is crucial to prevent the emergence of a security vacuum. At the same time, it is necessary to remain committed to implementing the fundamental decisions adopted by the Security Council.

We welcome the practical support that the Southern African Development Community (SADC) is providing to Kinshasa to address the crisis. It is important to ensure the necessary level of coordination with MONUSCO and to identify effective modalities for joint efforts. We thank the Secretariat for preparing proposals on the parameters for possible assistance to regional forces by the Mission. We encourage our colleagues to consider the option of increased support for the SADC contingent as part of region-wide efforts to stabilize the situation.

Russia, as a permanent member of the Security Council, will continue to assist in resolving the crisis in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. We support the country's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity.

I resume my functions as President of the Council.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

**Mr. Mukongo** (Democratic Republic of the Congo) (*spoke in French*): It is an honour to address the Council under your presidency, Madam President. I would like to congratulate your delegation on the skill with which it is leading the work of the Council. I would also like to thank the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea for his effective presidency last month. I would like to express our gratitude to the Secretary-General, Mr. António Guterres, and Ms. Bintou Keita, his Special Representative, for their tireless efforts to promote peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and their commitment to the negotiated withdrawal of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), the first phase of which was successfully completed. We pay tribute to the peacekeepers for their dedication and sacrifice in the service of the ideals of the United Nations. We thank the States members of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) for their solidarity in deploying the regional force of the SADC Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (SAMIDRC) in support of the Congolese armed forces and MONUSCO and honour the memory of the fallen SAMIDRC soldiers. Their sacrifice will not be in vain. Finally, we welcome the initiative of the United States

of America, which has led to a humanitarian truce, offering respite to the civilian populations who have borne the brunt of the Rwandan aggression.

The Council is considering the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (S/2024/482) and the letter on options for supporting the SADC regional force (S/2024/519), as presented this morning by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The joint Democratic Republic of the Congo-MONUSCO report on the first phase of MONUSCO's disengagement, including the road map for disengagement in South Kivu and the United Nations support plan for the transition in South Kivu, must also be taken into account.

I would like to outline my Government's approach to the United Nations support for the Southern African Development Community Mission (SAMIDRC) and the disengagement of MONUSCO before discussing the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

With regard to support for the SAMIDRC, it is important to underscore that, in accordance with the mandate given by the Security Council to the Secretary-General, my Government wrote to him on 13 April in support of the SADC letter of 30 March to request United Nations support for the SAMIDRC. That support includes air assets, ground transport, infrastructure, the refurbishment of MONUSCO facilities when it withdraws and financial resources to supplement the SAMIDRC budget for the procurement of drones and strategic air transport, as well as information and intelligence-gathering platforms. It must be recalled that this request for logistical support and collaboration between MONUSCO and regional forces, in particular those of SADC, is not new. Thanks to that collaboration, at our Government's request, MONUSCO established the rapid intervention brigade, which successfully defeated, in 2012, the Rwanda-backed Mouvement du 23 mars (M23).

We have taken note of the letter dated 28 June 2024 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council proposing three support options for the SAMIDRC force, and we thank him for it. In that respect, for lack of a better option, my Government endorses option 2, which entails limited use of MONUSCO's logistical resources and

military capabilities in the hope that those measures will enable the SAMIRDC to cover the needs of its logistical and operational mandate. In that regard, my delegation appeals to the conscience of the members of the Security Council to be realistic and take into account the devastating statistics of the crisis in the east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which has lasted for almost three decades, with a death toll of several millions and a catastrophic humanitarian situation of more than 7.2 million internally displaced persons (IDPs).

With regard to the disengagement of MONUSCO, the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo endorses the disengagement note it signed, together with MONUSCO, on 21 November 2023, at the request of the Security Council, for an accelerated, gradual, orderly and responsible withdrawal of the Mission from the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The note, which was validated by resolution 2717 (2023), adopted on 19 December 2023, provides for MONUSCO's departure in three phases.

My delegation welcomes the completion of the first phase, on 25 June 2024, at a ceremony presided over by Prime Minister Judith Suminwa Tuluka, with the departure of MONUSCO from South Kivu and the closure of the Mission's offices and installations in the province. That disengagement was made possible thanks to collaboration between the Government and MONUSCO, despite certain logistical and security challenges.

The other two phases involve North Kivu, for phase 2, and Ituri, for phase 3. For the time being, the Government's priority is to consolidate and reinforce State authority in South Kivu in order to prevent a security vacuum, according to the road map drawn up by the integrated provincial transition team. The time is therefore ripe for transition, during which the Government will fully assume the activities formerly carried out by MONUSCO, with the support of United Nations agencies, funds and programmes. Those activities are budgeted for in the provincial road map, whose implementation is due to start on 1 July 2024. However, due to ongoing aggression from Rwanda in North Kivu, the next withdrawal phase — phase 2 — will be undertaken when conditions permit, after ongoing joint assessments.

The ongoing attacks by the Rwanda Defence Force (RDF) and the M23 on IDP camps and their aggressive and ongoing military territorial expansion continue to

feature prominently in the Secretary-General's report (S/2024/482). That is indicated in paragraphs 91 and 92 of the Secretary-General's report, as the recent violent clashes around the town of Kanyabayonga, in the Lubero territories of North Kivu province, can attest.

This is the logical continuation of the facts reported by the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which, in the recent conclusions of its report on the Democratic Republic of the Congo (S/2024/432), asserted that between 3,000 and 4,000 soldiers of the RDF are currently operating in the territories of Nyiragongo, Rutshuru and Masisi. Those troops belong to various RDF divisions, notably the 2nd and 3rd Divisions, commanded by Major General Eugène Nkubito, and the RDF special forces, commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Augustin Ryarasa Migabo, which is documented in paragraphs 42 and 43 of the report of the Group of Experts.

The Group of Experts documented the RDF's deployment of advanced military technology and equipment, including 120-mm rocket launchers, mortar bombs and anti-tank missile containers. That is indicated in paragraph 46 of the report of the Group of Experts. However, shortly before becoming aware of that report, Government had drawn the Council's attention to the worsening security and humanitarian situation, characterized, in particular, by the bombardments of camps for war-displaced people in the east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which have caused a high number of casualties, the majority of them women and children. That is particularly true of the indiscriminate and deliberate bombardments perpetrated by the Rwandan army and its M23 proxy on 2 February 2024 against the Nzali camp for displaced persons and the tragedy experienced on 3 May 2024 by the Congolese population living in the war-displaced camps of Mugunga in North Kivu.

These attacks have been sufficiently documented and brought to the attention of the Security Council on numerous occasions, both by my Government and by successive reports of the United Nations group of experts on the security situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In its letter to the President of the Security Council dated 8 May 2024, my Government even asked the Council to convene a public meeting to that effect and to demand that Rwanda unconditionally withdraw its troops from the Democratic Republic of the Congo territory and cease all support for the M23, under threat of individual and collective sanctions.

Although that request was regularly brought to Council, it remained silent from the beginning to the end of May 2024, for reasons that still escape my delegation's understanding. Unfortunately, that silence has encouraged Rwanda and its M23 proxy to continue destabilizing the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Great Lakes region, exacerbating an already chaotic humanitarian situation. In that connection, paragraph 33 of the Secretary-General's report States that the cholera, measles and smallpox epidemics have continued to exacerbate an already complex humanitarian situation. My Government remains confident, however, that the Council will seize this opportunity to take appropriate measures in response to the harsh ordeal suffered by our fellow citizens, who are forced into perpetual wandering.

Because it is never too late to do better, my delegation invites the Council to join us in making several observations.

First, the aforementioned attacks — as denounced by the Secretary-General, United Nations groups of experts and my Government — constitute an umpteenth flagrant violation of the territorial integrity, sovereignty and political independence of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as well as of the Luanda road map.

Secondly, the deployment of Rwandan soldiers on Congolese territory without the invitation or consent of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Rwanda's alliance with the M23 terrorist group in order to destabilize my country, constitute serious violations of the Charter of the United Nations, the Constitutive Act of the African Union, and General Assembly resolution 3314 (XXIX), of 14 December 1974, which defines the act of aggression as the use of armed force by a State against the sovereignty, territorial integrity or political independence of another State or in any other manner inconsistent with the Charter of the United Nations.

Thirdly, it seems that Rwanda is being guaranteed impunity and that it enjoys a blank check, thanks to its participation in as one of the troop-contributing countries to United Nations peacekeeping operations, and bolstered by the Security Council's benevolence towards it. Since 2022, Rwandan forces and the M23 have repeatedly attacked MONUSCO and the SAMIDRC positions, as well as helicopters, resulting in the deaths of several Blue Helmets, including peacekeepers from some of the Council's member States. Those attacks constitute war crimes.

The Security Council must act because the Rwandan authorities are not respecting any of their commitments, are destabilizing the Congolese State and are defying international and regional organizations, even going so far as making a public appeal in the international media for support for the M23, an armed terrorist group made in Rwanda, so that it can kill Congolese people and overthrow institutional order in the Democratic Republic of the Congo without the Security Council taking any action.

It has to be recognized that the much-desired cessation of hostilities and de-escalation will not be possible as long as Rwanda and its M23 allies continue to fan the flames and Rwandan leaders do not respect their commitments under the Luanda process. The Democratic Republic of the Congo will defend its territorial integrity, sovereignty and security and will protect its people at all costs, while remaining open to a political settlement of the conflict with Rwanda through diplomatic channels. However, that path will not be credible unless the Rwandan troops effectively withdraw from the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in order to allow for frank and constructive dialogue.

My Government therefore calls on the Security Council, the guarantor of international peace and security, to remain fully aware of the danger posed by the current behaviour of the Rwandan authorities and to assume its responsibility by adopting all the necessary preventive measures to put an end to a continued deterioration of the situation, which threatens the entire region. In view of what I have said here, and in order to contribute to a lasting solution to the security crisis in the east of our country through diplomatic means and to promote peace and stability in the Great Lakes region, the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo requests the Security Council to do the following.

First, ask the Secretary-General and MONUSCO to provide substantial logistical and operational support to the SAMIDRC to enable it to fulfil the mandate given to it by the SADC Heads of State and Government.

Secondly, define a sanctions regime applicable to Rwanda and its leaders.

Thirdly, sanction the Rwandan State, its leaders and any legal or natural person involved in aggression, war crimes, crimes against humanity and serious human

rights violations committed by the RDF and the M23 on Congolese territory.

Fourthly, officially demand the unconditional withdrawal of Rwandan troops from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, or have them face individual and collective sanctions.

Fifthly, suspend all participation by Rwandan troops in United Nations peace operations and declare an arms embargo against Rwanda until it stops supporting the M23 and withdraws its army completely from the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Lastly, denounce and punish the involvement of Rwandan authorities in the illegal exploitation of natural, mining and agricultural resources in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

**The President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Rwanda.

**Mr. Rwamucyo** (Rwanda): Let me take this opportunity, Madam President, to congratulate you on assuming the presidency of the Council this month. I would like to thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Bintou Keita for her briefing and members for their statements.

Before delving into the content of the report (S/2024/482), allow me to provide some historical context to the Council on the root causes of the current crisis in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. The presence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo of communities of Rwandan origin, speaking Kinyarwanda, which is our national language, dates back to before colonial rule. After decades of divide-and-rule policies, coupled with the stigmatization of those communities, who were considered to be aliens by both the post-independence authorities and the colonial ruler, there have been various attempts at denying those people their fundamental rights of citizenship, safety and protection.

That complex situation was aggravated in 1994 when the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo saw a massive influx of people crossing the border, among whom were the perpetrators of the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda. As a result, hundreds of thousands of Congolese Tutsis were persecuted and were forced out of their homes. They are now refugees living across the region, with only one wish — to return to their homes in a safe and dignified manner.

Given the historical context of the conflict and its root causes, it is clear that neither a military solution nor the scapegoating of Rwanda will provide a lasting solution to the crisis. In 2013, an attempt to end the conflict by armed means did not last for long, leaving us to deal with the same issues once again. One cannot repeat the same process, expecting different results.

The security and governance failures of the Democratic Republic of the Congo led to the mushrooming of illegal armed groups. We count more than 250 armed groups — chief among them is the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR), but there are also the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), linked to the Islamic State, and various Mayi-Mayi and ethnically charged violent bands of thugs, all roaming across the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and causing havoc and mayhem. Despite numerous initiatives to resolve the situation, the lack of political will by the Democratic Republic of the Congo authorities to resolve the underlying root causes of the conflict brought us to the worrisome security and humanitarian situation we witness today.

The mid-term report highlights the importance of ownership, by all parties, of the peace process. So far, the international community and the Democratic Republic of the Congo have failed to comprehensively ensure the protection of Congolese citizens, especially Congolese Tutsi populations who are being ethnically cleansed by armed groups, part of the coalition that the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo supports. The report also highlights incidents in which innocent civilians were targeted. Rwanda takes this opportunity to reiterate its firm condemnation of those attacks, including the ones against internally displaced persons camps, which were put at great risk by the presence of heavy weaponry in their vicinity, as documented by international organizations such as Doctors without Borders. Rwanda similarly condemns the attacks that claimed the lives of United Nations peacekeepers. Such events are of grave concern.

I wish to clarify that Rwanda has never been opposed to any multinational forces in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. On the contrary, Rwanda supported the efforts of the East African Community regional forces. However, it is important to recall that those efforts were undermined by the Democratic Republic of the Congo Government, as they were not seen to be offensive enough, despite having

achieved very positive results, including the more than 70 per cent withdrawal of the Mouvement du 23 mars and the ceasefire between the warring parties.

In an effort to secure a more offensive force, the Democratic Republic of the Congo Government called upon Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries to intervene. In that light, it is easy to conclude that the Southern African Development Community Mission to the Democratic Republic of the Congo (SAMIDRC) is far from being neutral. In fact, it has even coalesced with ethnically charged illegal armed groups like the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR), acting under the guise of the Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo (FARDC). It is well known that the FARDC operates and is embedded with the FDLR and provides military, financial and other support.

That support to the FDLR poses a great threat to Rwanda's security, sovereignty and territorial integrity. The FDLR is a threat to Rwanda and the Great Lakes region at large owing to its renewed capacity to cause harm, thanks to the support it receives from the Democratic Republic of the Congo's highest authorities, which even vowed to cause regime change in Rwanda. The FDLR also poses a great threat to regional stability because of its dangerous genocidal ideology, a cancer that has become deeply rooted within the Congolese population and that has resulted in the current ethnic cleansing and hate speech against Congolese Tutsi that the United Nations Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide, Member States and members of the Council and many other observers have called out. That must be taken seriously.

In view of those facts, it is worrisome that the Security Council would consider supporting such a force under resolution 2717 (2023). Rwanda calls for the United Nations to thoroughly examine the SAMIDRC and to verify whether the support that is being requested is in line with the United Nations Human Rights Due Diligence Policy. That has been mentioned several times in the Council. It is the duty of the Council to ensure that Member States' contributions do not end up in the hands of illegal armed groups, let alone a United Nations sanctioned terror group such as the FDLR. I therefore call for Council members to reconsider and not become enablers of genocidal forces and be tainted by association with their crimes. As Council members know, the FDLR has committed heinous crimes across the Democratic Republic of the Congo, so any support

to any force that is embedded with the FDLR would be tainting the United Nations and its actions.

I wish to conclude by expressing once again Rwanda's support for regional initiatives, especially the Nairobi and Luanda peace processes. Rwanda strongly appeals to the international community to support those regional efforts, which focus on political solutions, including the need for political dialogue and the need to permanently address the issues of the FDLR by disarming, demobilizing and repatriating them to Rwanda.

**The President** (*spoke in Russian*): The representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo has asked for the floor to make a further statement. I now give him the floor.

**Mr. Mukongo** (Democratic Republic of the Congo) (*spoke in French*): I apologize for requesting the floor once again, but untruths must be denounced and must not be allowed to gain ground in the Council, which is an institution that is highly respected by the international community.

First, the argument that the Rwandan-speaking population in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is persecuted is fallacious, because the Democratic Republic of the Congo shares a border with nine countries, and there are groups hailing from those nine countries in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and, in fact, make up the country's population. We have nationals of Angola, Gabon, the Central African Republic, South Sudan, Rwanda, Burundi and Zambia in our country — all nine countries bordering the Democratic Republic of the Congo have nationals in our country, where they live in peace with the Congolese people. It is therefore absurd to believe that only the Rwandan-speaking communities would be targeted — why would that be the case? We do not see any valid reason to target the Rwandan-speaking population.

Secondly, we have already explained here in the Council the root causes of the conflict. Those causes date back to 1994, when the genocide took place. The genocide occurred in Rwanda between Rwandans, and the Hutu population, which comprises a majority of the population of Rwanda, were welcomed by the Democratic Republic of the Congo following a military operation that was authorized by the United Nations. They sought refuge in the east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Rwanda considered them a

threat during that period. The Democratic Republic of the Congo even agreed to conduct joint operations with the Rwandan army precisely to attack the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR), so that Rwanda does not have to say that they constitute a threat. Reports by international organizations today establish that it is a residual force that is vanishingly small. As I have already said here in the Council, Rwanda has already declared that the FDLR do not pose a threat to its security. Why does it continue to say the same thing?

Lastly, with regard to the support for the Southern African Development Community Mission to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, we believe that it is perfectly normal for us to request that kind of support

and for the Southern African Development Community to intervene, because there is a country invading our territory. The Security Council is aware that a military intervention of that nature, an aggression, must be repulsed by the international community. That is all that we are asking — we are simply asking Rwanda to go back home so that we can remain neighbours and so that we can have a discussion. As long as they remain on Congolese territory, it will be hard to discuss anything.

**The President** (*spoke in Russian*): There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers. I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion of the subject.

*The meeting rose at 12.05 p.m.*