



# Security Council

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*Provisional*

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New York

*President:* Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield . . . . . (United States of America)

*Members:*

Algeria . . . . .	Mr. Gaouaoui
China . . . . .	Mr. Fu Cong
Ecuador . . . . .	Mr. Montalvo Sosa
France . . . . .	Mr. De Rivière
Guyana . . . . .	Mrs. Rodrigues-Birkett
Japan . . . . .	Mr. Mikanagi
Malta . . . . .	Ms. Gatt
Mozambique . . . . .	Mr. Afonso
Republic of Korea . . . . .	Mr. Hwang
Russian Federation . . . . .	Mr. Polyanskiy
Sierra Leone . . . . .	Mr. Kanu
Slovenia . . . . .	Mr. Žbogar
Switzerland . . . . .	Mrs. Baeriswyl
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Mr. Kariuki

## 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/2024/863)

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*The meeting was called to order at 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/2024/863)**

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

On behalf of the Council, I welcome Her Excellency Ms. Thérèse Kayikwamba Wagner, Minister for Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and Francophonie of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Ms. Bintou Keita, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo; and Ms. Passy Mubalama, Founder of the Action and Development Initiative for the Protection of Women and Children.

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

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2024/863, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

I now give the floor to Ms. Keita.

**Ms. Keita** (*spoke in French*): Allow me to thank you, Madam President, for another opportunity to brief the Security Council on the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I welcome the presence of Her Excellency Ms. Thérèse Kayikwamba Wagner, Minister for Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and Francophonie of the Democratic Republic of the Congo; and His Excellency Mr. Ernest Rwamucyo, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Rwanda.

Angola, the representative of which I welcome to this meeting, has announced the holding of summit with the Heads of State of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda in Luanda on 15 December, which represents an opportunity to make significant progress in stabilizing the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region. I commend Angola on its tireless mediation efforts and reiterate that the United Nations stands fully ready to continue its support.

(*spoke in English*)

The reporting period was marked by political tensions around calls to revise the Constitution and the continued and escalating insecurity in North Kivu and Ituri, especially related to the activity of the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), the Mouvement du 23 mars (M23), the Coopérative pour le développement du Congo (CODECO) and Zaïre. Almost one year after the 2023 elections, and in line with its programme of action, the Congolese Government has initiated governance reforms to improve the purchasing power of the population, enhance access to basic social services, strengthen the security and defence apparatus, reinforce the justice system and promote the sound management of public funds and natural resources. In that context, I encourage relevant stakeholders to work together to avoid further tensions around the possible revision of the Constitution and ensure that the country remains on its path towards stability. In that regard, I welcome the adoption by the Council of Ministers on 22 November of a bill programming police reform for the period from 2025 to 2029. Once adopted in Parliament, I invite Member States to fully support its implementation. Similarly, I encourage the Council to support Government efforts to implement the Disarmament, Demobilization, Community Recovery and Stabilization Programme.

As previously mentioned, I commend recent progress made in the Luanda process. On 5 November, the reinforced ad-hoc verification mechanism was launched in Goma. On 23 November, in Luanda, Angola and the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) signed a memorandum of understanding to support the operationalization of the mechanism, which is mandated to monitor the 4 August ceasefire. Two days later, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda signed the concept of operations for the harmonized plan for the neutralization of the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda and

disengagement of forces/lifting of Rwandan defensive measures, as part of a broader peace accord. In addition, on 20 November, the mandate of the Southern African Development Community Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (SAMIDRC) was renewed for another year. In accordance with resolution 2746 (2024), I wish to highlight MONUSCO's continued support to SAMIDRC's international human rights and humanitarian law compliance framework, in collaboration with relevant partners, such as the African Union and the Southern African Development Community.

*(spoke in French)*

The security situation in Ituri and North Kivu remains worrisome. The M23, which has not signed the ceasefire agreement, has consolidated its civilian and military occupation of North Kivu. Currently, it controls vast areas in the territories of Masisi, Rutshuru, Walikale, Nyiragongo and Lubero, an area which is twice the size of that occupied in 2012. The Allied Democratic Forces remain the deadliest armed group, with hundreds of civilians killed in recent months. In Ituri, although the number of attacks on civilians by CODECO and Zaïre has fallen over the past three months, the protection of civilians remains a challenge and an absolute priority. In such a complex environment, MONUSCO is facilitating dialogue among the relevant actors, encouraging the participation of women and young people in peace processes, taking deterrent measures against potential attacks and supporting the Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo in their protection operations. MONUSCO is protecting approximately 100,000 internally displaced people (IDPs) living around its bases in Roe, Drodoro and Fataki. In addition, Operation Secure Harvest — involving more than 860 patrols over a vast geographic area since 1 October — has enabled farmers in 40 sites between Bunia and Djugu in Ituri to harvest the fruits of their labour in complete safety.

In order to better protect civilians, the MONUSCO force must have freedom of movement and be able to manoeuvre. I call on all the security actors present in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo to maintain active and constructive coordination and cooperation with MONUSCO. And for the safety and security of civilians and peacekeepers, spoofing and GPS jamming activities in North Kivu must cease immediately.

All too often, the map of violence aligns with the map of natural resources. In North Kivu, following its offensive against Pinga at the end of October, the M23 took control of the Lubira goldfield. I encourage the countries of the Great Lakes region to coordinate their fight against the illicit exploitation of natural resources and to strengthen traceability mechanisms to weaken the armed groups.

*(spoke in English)*

MONUSCO has continued to build the capacity of community members as well as defence and security forces in the areas of the protection of civilians and early warning. Awareness-raising activities on the protection of children in armed conflict reached more than 2,780 community members, 35 per cent of them women, as well as more than 2,700 members of the defence and security forces and 264 employees of non-governmental partners. I welcomed the Democratic Republic of the Congo Government's presentation on 19 November of its third national action plan on resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security. That important document is expected to improve gender mainstreaming in decision-making bodies and conflict-management mechanisms. I also commend the institutional and regional support given to the initiatives undertaken by the women of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region to restore peace and promote and protect women and girls' rights.

The prevailing security environment continues to alarmingly exacerbate the humanitarian situation, which has been deteriorating even more thanks to increasing climate-change challenges. According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, almost 6.4 million people are currently displaced owing to armed conflicts and natural hazards. Multiple epidemics have also aggravated the humanitarian situation. In that precarious humanitarian context, I would nonetheless like to share an encouraging development. As of early December, the 2024 humanitarian response plan was funded at 50.2 per cent, with \$1.28 billion disbursed out of \$2.6 billion, a significant improvement from the total funding of \$940 million received in 2023. That record-level funding enabled humanitarian partners to provide life-saving assistance to 5.8 million people between January and October 2024. I therefore encourage donors to increase their generosity in 2025.

Tomorrow, 10 December, will see the end of the 16 days of activism against gender-based violence.

I want to take this opportunity to highlight that the figures concerning gender-based violence and sexual exploitation remain appalling, with more than 90,000 cases documented since the beginning of the year, 39,000 of them in North Kivu alone. While prevention efforts should continue to drastically reduce the number of cases, I salute the efforts of the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to fight impunity — notably through its reparation funds, which pursue the identification of victims and consider financial or in-kind individual and collective reparations. In that context, I reiterate my unwavering commitment to a strict policy of zero tolerance for sexual exploitation and abuse by United Nations personnel. I count on the cooperation of troop- and police-contributing countries to prevent such reprehensible acts and ensure accountability. I further reiterate the commitment of the United Nations system to ensuring adequate safeguards and providing survivors with the holistic care and support that they are entitled to.

I also welcome the International Criminal Court's decision to renew its investigative efforts in the Democratic Republic of the Congo with a priority focus on the crimes under the Rome Statute that are alleged to have occurred in North Kivu since January 2022. That may support the efforts to combat impunity and deter crimes. On a broader note, I hope that the Democratic Republic of the Congo's election to the Human Rights Council will give it more leverage to promote human rights principles and standards, with a focus on the most vulnerable.

*(spoke in French)*

Although it is essential to ensure that the Angolan facilitation process continues to receive constant support from the regional and international community, it is also vital that local, provincial, national and regional processes work in harmony and complement one another to promote lasting peace and stability. The recommendations made by armed groups and civil society, particularly women, during the Nairobi process offer valuable opportunities in that respect.

*(spoke in English)*

The Security Council is preparing to determine MONUSCO's new mandate. It currently prioritizes support for the protection of civilians as well as disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and security sector reform processes. I would like to

reiterate that the Mission remains fully committed to its gradual and responsible disengagement. Building on the lessons learned from South Kivu, the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and MONUSCO are working jointly on a disengagement approach tailored to territorial security dynamics and the needs for the protection of civilians. In the meantime, the Government and the United Nations remain committed to consolidating the transition in South Kivu. I am encouraged by the Government's commitment to providing \$30 million of the \$57 million required for the implementation of the first year of the South Kivu transition plan. However, as South Kivu is facing several security challenges, I urge the Democratic Republic of the Congo and its partners to avoid financing gaps and to fast-track the strengthening of institutions. That will foster the protection of civilians, the rule of law and full respect for human rights.

Last week's signing of the new United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework for the period from 2025 to 2029 will also contribute to the reconfiguration of the United Nations presence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in the context of MONUSCO's disengagement. I encourage Member States to provide their full support for its implementation.

In conclusion, I would like to amplify the voices of the women and people living with disabilities whom I recently met in the Kahembe IDP site in North Kivu. They are calling for greater investment in their well-being, including access to basic necessities such as food, clean water, healthcare, sanitation, security and protection against sexual violence. Congolese children from Goma are also advocating for increased support for the reintegration of conflict-affected communities. Together, women, persons with disabilities, young people and children are united in their call for a restoration of lasting peace in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo so that they can return to their homes and schools with dignity.

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

I now give the floor to Ms. Mubalama.

**Ms. Mubalama** *(spoke in French)*: It is an honour to be with members today to provide a briefing for the very first time to the Security Council on the situation in my country, the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I thank the Security Council for this opportunity to provide members with an update on the situation in

eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, where the political, security and humanitarian challenges continue to increase, requiring ongoing attention from the international community.

Today's briefing comes at a crucial time, when the situation in the eastern part of the country, in particular North Kivu, remains deeply concerning, despite peace efforts that are under way, specifically as part of the Luanda process. The process, aimed at easing tensions between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda, which is being accused of actively supporting the Mouvement du 23 mars (M23), is progressing slowly.

Imagine fleeing your war-torn village to seek refuge in a camp for displaced persons to protect your family from rebel abuses. But once there, the place that is supposed to be a refuge becomes a target. Bombs are dropped there, and you and your family die. That is our reality. "Fleeing to a camp for displaced people or staying in our homes is simply choosing where we want to die," says Noëlla, a 26-year-old mother of three, from Masisi, whom we are assisting and whose husband was killed by the M23 during the capture of Mushaki. We recall that in the camps around Goma, several bombs landed on a site for displaced people on 8 May, causing more than 35 deaths and leaving many others injured, in violation of humanitarian principles.

I stand before members today to warn them about a human tragedy unfolding in my country, which is being exacerbated by regional dynamics, including Rwanda's role and its support for the M23. As I speak, many villages in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo have come under the control of the M23 rebels, causing a mass displacement of the population, loss of life, war crimes and crimes against humanity. Just yesterday, violent fighting was reported in the territory of Lubero, in violation of the ceasefire. I am taking the floor today not only as the director of a women's rights organization in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and of a radio station that gives a voice to women but also and especially as a direct witness to the daily horrors experienced by the population, in particular women and children displaced by the war, in the east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

I will tell members the story of Zawadi, a mother of nine, who does not know the identity of the father of her eighth child. She was raped as she fled the clashes that ensued when the M23 took control of Rutshuru

territory. On the day her village was attacked, she had just arrived at her house on her way back from the fields. When the armed men entered her house, they killed her father-in-law, who was with her at the time. After being raped, she was saved just in time when she was six months pregnant. She had to walk for several days before arriving at the Kanyaruchinya camp in North Kivu, where we took her in. Another displaced woman in Lushagala camp was raped by armed men, who put a gun to her husband's head. She was raped, humiliated and dishonoured in front of her family, her husband and even her children.

These events that I am recounting are not just stories, but the daily lived reality of many women and girls who are the victims of armed conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Our organization, Action and Development Initiative for the Protection of Women and Children, works in various camps for displaced people in North Kivu, where the risk of violence is constantly increasing due to armed conflicts. Of the six territories in the province, with the support of the Rwandan army, the M23 is in at least five territories, in violation of the territorial integrity of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The armed forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, working in coalition with the Wazalendo, the majority of whom are members of armed groups, are unable to prevent the M23 from capturing localities on several front lines so as to ensure protection of the civilian population.

Although presented as a local armed group, the M23 receives external logistical, financial and military support, in particular from Rwanda. Recent reports from Congolese civil society, including those from the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo, have documented clear evidence of that support, including in terms of weapons supplies, military training and reinforcements. More than 4,000 soldiers of the Rwandan armed forces are on Congolese soil. They justify their presence by saying they are hunting down elements of the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR). However, how can such a strong military presence in another United Nations Member State be justified?

How can we justify the presence and advance of rebels in an area with the largest United Nations mission in the world, with more than 20,000 Blue Helmets? It is clear that the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) has demonstrated its limits when



it comes to restoring peace. If it has been unable to contribute for more than 20 years to establishing peace and protecting civilians in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, what can we expect from this force? In the eyes of the Congolese people, the disengagement process, initiated in cooperation with the Congolese Government, is an admission of failure of the United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The current force in North Kivu, with its current mandate, fails to respond effectively to the threat to the civilian population in that area.

We still recall the interview with the Secretary-General, António Guterres, shortly before the opening of the seventy-seventh session of the General Assembly. He admitted the inability of the Blue Helmets of the United Nations force in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to fight the M23 rebellion. He said,

“[t]he truth is that the M23 today is a modern army, with heavy equipment that is more sophisticated than MONUSCO’s equipment. Furthermore, that equipment comes from somewhere. It does not just appear in the forest”.

We welcome the efforts of the United Nations, but it is clear that the situation in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo far exceeds the means deployed. The resolutions adopted here must be accompanied by concrete and urgent action on the ground. It is unacceptable that, despite the incessant calls by Congolese civil society, the violence continues, with an almost absolute silence from the international community and, at times, the Security Council.

I can imagine that members have heard several stories about the cases of women who are raped in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and are tired of it because this has gone on for decades. The Congo is tiring. But how can the Council be tired when thousands of people are still being killed? How can it be tired when women, children and sometimes even infants are being raped every day? How can it give up when children are dying of hunger in camps for internally displaced persons or while working, or when displaced women are forced to resort to survival sex to obtain barely 2,000 Congolese francs — less than \$1 — to buy something to eat? With the support of our various partners, my colleagues and I work every day at those sites, and we see the misery and the consequences that the war has inflicted on the population. When I talk to displaced women, they do not say they need money or

clothes. All they want is peace so that they can go back to their fields to farm and support their children.

Many countries that are members of the Security Council have invested a lot of money in buying arms, missiles and fighter planes to prepare for or prevent war. But we must recognize that war is so expensive and that it is time to invest in building peace in the world. The instability in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo is not just a problem for my country. It is fuelling a regional cycle of violence and transnational crime, including trafficking in natural resources. By neglecting that crisis, we are allowing instability to take root, with consequences that will extend beyond the borders of Central Africa. I stand here today not only to denounce the situation but to call for urgent action.

First, it is essential to put diplomatic pressure on the regional players involved in the conflict, particularly Rwanda and Uganda, in order to end logistical and financial support for the armed groups.

Secondly, we need action to fight impunity, in particular by supporting international investigations into human rights violations and war crimes committed by the M23 and other groups in the region.

Thirdly, we need the adoption of a firm resolution condemning external support for armed groups in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, with monitoring and verification mechanisms.

Fourthly, it will be vital to pressure Rwanda diplomatically to finally cease all support for the M23 and engage sincerely in peace efforts. Rwanda, as a member of the international community and a key regional player, has a moral and legal responsibility. Its alleged involvement in the conflict runs counter to the fundamental principles of the Charter of the United Nations. However, the crisis cannot be resolved solely at the regional level. The Security Council must play its part to save lives.

Fifthly, we need concrete support for the Luanda process, especially in the implementation of the commitments undertaken by Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, including the neutralization of the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda once and for all, so as to remove any pretext for Rwanda to attack its neighbour, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and the definitive withdrawal of Rwandan troops from Congolese soil.

I would like to end by conveying a message from the survivors with whom I work. Despite everything those women have been through, they have not lost their courage or their faith in a better future. They are fighters who will rebuild our communities if they are supported. We need the Council's help to turn their hopes into reality.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo is asking not for charity but for justice and international solidarity. The eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo cannot continue to be a battleground for playing out the political and economic ambitions of various neighbouring States. What we are experiencing is an open wound on the conscience of the world. Today the Council has the power to put an end to it. On behalf of all the Congolese women I work with, I ask members to make the crisis in the Democratic Republic of the Congo an absolute priority. We need a courageous international community that is prepared to call each actor by its name, denounce abuses and demand accountability. For me, that is what the United Nations is all about, because we believe in one people. The displaced women, children and men I have met have lost their homes, their loved ones and often their dignity. But they have not lost hope. I want to convey that hope to the Council today, in the belief that its decisions can change their destiny. Together, let us refuse to let history repeat itself. Together, let us make justice and peace a reality.

**The President:** I thank Ms. Mubalama 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 would like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Ms. Mubalama for their briefings, and I welcome the presence of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as well as the representatives of Rwanda and Angola.

I would like to discuss three points.

First, the situation in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo must continue to spur all of us to mobilize. The primary victims in the conflict are civilians. The eastern part of the country is enduring one of the worst humanitarian crises in the world. Violations of international humanitarian law and human rights, in particular sexual violence, continue

at intolerable levels. The illegal exploitation of natural resources is fuelling the continuation of the conflict. Humanitarian access is being hampered and attacks on humanitarian personnel are increasing. Armed groups continue to destabilize the country. The Allied Democratic Forces is the deadliest group in North Kivu and Ituri. The Mouvement du 23 mars (M23), with the active support of the Rwanda Defence Force present on Congolese territory, is continuing its expansion in violation of the ceasefire. It is setting up parallel administrations in defiance of the sovereignty of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The Wazalendo are mistreating civilians. All of those abuses must stop.

Secondly, despite that context, the recent progress made in the Luanda process is encouraging. I welcome the launch last month of the strengthened ad hoc ceasefire verification mechanism, while the approval of the harmonized neutralization plan's concept of operations is a major step forward. It is now up to the parties to complete the implementation of their commitments — the neutralization of the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda by the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the complete withdrawal by Rwanda of its forces from Congolese territory. France reaffirms its unwavering support for President Lourenço in his mediation efforts, and for all players involved in the regional processes. We hope that the upcoming tripartite summit in Luanda on 15 December will pave the way for a lasting peace agreement between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda.

Thirdly, the upcoming renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) will be an opportunity for the Council to reaffirm its support for the Mission's decisive action. MONUSCO plays a recognized role in the protection of civilians and is saving lives on a daily basis. However, it is facing a particularly difficult environment. The deployment of surface-to-air missile systems and the jamming of GPS signals in areas controlled by the M23 are undermining its ability to fulfil its mandate and endangering peacekeepers. The M23 is also preventing peacekeepers from carrying out their rotations and protection-of-civilian patrols. We condemn those actions.

We will work to ensure that, given the upcoming mandate renewal, MONUSCO's core tasks are preserved. The protection of civilians must remain the top priority. That includes support for the

Disarmament, Demobilization, Community Recovery and Stabilization Programme and for security sector reform. That also entails pursuing MONUSCO's responsible withdrawal process through a more flexible and gradual approach, as requested by the Congolese authorities. It is crucial to take into account the situation on the ground and the dynamics of the conflict in order to prevent a security vacuum. At the same time, we must also help the Congolese Government to gradually take on MONUSCO's responsibilities.

I would like to conclude by commending the United Nations, especially MONUSCO and Special Representative Bintou Keita, for their unwavering efforts in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and by reaffirming France's full support for them.

**Mr. Hwang** (Republic of Korea): I thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Keita and Ms. Mubalama for their sobering briefings. I also warmly welcome Her Excellency Ms. Kayikwamba Wagner, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and the representatives of Rwanda and Angola to today's meeting.

I would like to underscore four points today.

First, we welcome the encouraging progress in the Luanda regional peace process over the past month. The launch of the reinforced ad hoc verification mechanism, which will be supported by the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), is a crucial step towards ensuring compliance with the 30 July ceasefire agreement between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda. The signing of the concept of operations at the ministerial meeting on 25 November to implement the harmonized plan for the neutralization of the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda and the disengagement of forces marks another significant step for peace in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. We also take note of the one-year extension of the mandate of the Southern African Development Community Mission to the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We strongly support the mediation efforts of President Lourenço of Angola. We look forward to a potential peace agreement proposed by Angola, as well as the convening of a tripartite summit, and encourage all parties to remain sincerely engaged.

Secondly, Korea strongly condemns the activities of armed groups in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and any external support provided to

them. The continued territorial expansion of the Mouvement du 23 mars/Alliance Fleuve Congo, alongside the establishment of parallel administrations to consolidate that control, poses grave threats to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Other armed groups, such as the Allied Democratic Forces and the Coopérative pour le développement du Congo, also continue to perpetrate horrific violence against innocent civilians. The illegal exploitation of natural resources interlinked with armed groups exacerbates instability. All armed groups must immediately lay down their arms and join the Disarmament, Demobilization, Community Recovery and Stabilization Programme. The Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo should also work to establish platforms for dialogue with armed groups and to revitalize the Nairobi process in that regard. Countries providing support to armed groups or intervening militarily in the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo must cease such actions. Their actions only fuel further violence and instability in the broader Great Lakes region, in addition to putting their own security at risk.

Thirdly, it is imperative that MONUSCO's activities and peacekeepers' safety and security are not hindered. Their core mandate of protecting civilians depends on unimpeded freedom of movement and operational manoeuvre. Peacekeepers are not safe when there is interference through GPS jamming and spoofing. Despite the significant challenges, we commend MONUSCO for its robust posture, including the full deployment of an artillery position in Rusayo. Their community-based early-warning system has proven to mitigate protection risks.

Fourthly, the alarming humanitarian and human rights situation, especially the plight of women and girls, demands urgent attention and action. The use of sexual violence as a weapon of war, particularly near internally displaced persons sites around Goma, is deeply concerning. It is in that regard that Korea has allocated half of its \$5 million in support to the Democratic Republic of the Congo this year to assisting survivors of gender-based violence. Ensuring women's full, equal, meaningful and safe participation in peace processes is vital to amplifying their voices and effectively addressing conflict-related sexual violence issues and beyond.

In conclusion, the Republic of Korea will engage constructively in the upcoming MONUSCO mandate



renewal. We reaffirm our unwavering support for MONUSCO, Special Representative of the Secretary-General Keita and regional organizations in their efforts to achieve lasting peace and stability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

**Mr. Montalvo Sosa** (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to express our particular thanks to Special Representative of the Secretary-General Keita for her detailed and informative briefing, in addition to our more general appreciation for her commitment and leadership, which Ecuador has noted well during its two-year term on the Security Council. I welcome the Minister for Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and Francophonie of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I acknowledge the presence here today of the representatives of Rwanda and Angola, and I have taken note of the briefing by the civil society representative.

Today I would like to highlight four key aspects of the report of the Secretary-General (S/2024/863).

First, on the political front, we have followed closely the evolving internal political dynamics, in particular the challenges presented by the proposal to revise the Constitution. Transparent and inclusive dialogue is the key to resolving internal tensions, and political stability is a *sine qua non* requirement for addressing the grave security situation in the country.

Secondly, on the security front, we are encouraged by the regional efforts led by Angola within the framework of the Luanda process, which have culminated in the establishment of the reinforced ad hoc verification mechanism, aimed at monitoring compliance with the ceasefire agreed in July and promoting regional stability through the stabilization of armed groups. It is clear that the continuing tensions between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda are hindering the implementation of the mechanism and compliance with the ceasefire. As a result, many people, including more than 300 civilians, have unfortunately been killed, and numerous human rights violations have been committed, including an alarming number of violent incidents committed in Ituri and North Kivu. Equally deplorable is the territorial expansion by the Mouvement du 23 mars, which has consolidated its control in certain sectors of North Kivu, as well as the serious abuses perpetrated by the Allied Democratic Forces and the Coopérative pour le développement du Congo, which has exacerbated the violence against civilians, including sexual violence

against women and children. The zero-tolerance policy is the correct policy. The protection of civilians is the priority. All perpetrators of those atrocities must face justice without delay.

Thirdly, on the humanitarian situation, the security crisis has led to the forced displacement of approximately 6.4 million people. In addition, the Democratic Republic of the Congo is facing a complex health situation resulting from the violence, with recurring outbreaks of cholera and measles and the spread of the mpox epidemic. The international community must increase its financial support to the humanitarian plan, which is close to 50 per cent funded, leaving a considerable deficit that prevents the provision of priority humanitarian assistance.

Fourthly, we have seen gradual progress in the process of the transfer of responsibilities from the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) to the Congolese State. We acknowledge the progress that has been made so far, demonstrating the commitment of the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to ensuring that the State strengthens its presence throughout the territory as a first step towards lasting peace. The Council adopted resolution 2717 (2023) last December, and as we know, among other aspects the resolution clarified the MONUSCO disengagement process. It will be important to assess the elements mentioned by Special Representative Keita as lessons learned that should be considered.

I also want to highlight the role of the African Union and the Southern African Development Community in joining forces to influence the resolution of the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo through the Southern African Development Community Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in an example of the effective support that regional and subregional organizations can provide to the maintenance of international peace and security.

I would like to conclude by once again expressing Ecuador's support for Special Representative Bintou Keita and the MONUSCO staff in their full compliance with the Security Council's mandate. MONUSCO's support for the Democratic Republic of the Congo is still essential, and we encourage Representative Keita to continue working to provide support and operational capacity for resolving the underlying causes of violence

and consolidating peace in full cooperation with the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

**Mrs. Baeriswyl** (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): I too would like to begin by thanking the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for her briefing, as well as for her deep commitment, which we have witnessed over the past two years. I welcome the presence of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the representatives of Rwanda and Angola at today's meeting. I would also like to thank Ms. Mubalama for her realistic depiction of the situation of the population in the eastern part of the country, particularly as it concerns women.

Let me begin by echoing the inspiring words of human rights defender Sarah Ntambwe to the Security Council during the Swiss presidency in October:

“the peace process is a glimmer of hope for those of us who dream of living in a better world where the sound of bombing and the cries of the dying will no longer be heard.” (*S/PV.9742, p. 23*)

Those words are a powerful call to action, echoing what we perceived during the Council's visit to the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In order to give concrete expression to that hope, Switzerland has been fully committed for the past two years to promoting a peaceful solution to the conflict, strengthening the protection of civilians and defending respect for international law. In that context, I would like to highlight three points.

First, beyond the end of its term on the Council, Switzerland will continue to support regional efforts to find political solutions to the conflict and strengthen the participation of women. We welcome the progress made in the Luanda process and the announcement of a tripartite summit to be held on 15 December. Including the vision of local actors continues to be a crucial factor in bringing conflicts to an end. The recent signing of a concept of operations between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda is an important step. However, concrete measures to build confidence must follow without delay. We reiterate the need for Rwanda to immediately withdraw its troops from the Democratic Republic of the Congo and cease all support to the Mouvement du 23 mars (M23). At the same time, the Democratic Republic of the Congo must intensify its efforts to neutralize the Forces démocratiques de

libération du Rwanda and cease all cooperation with that group.

Secondly, the alarming security and humanitarian situation in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo must end as soon as possible. As we heard, people in the already overcrowded camps for displaced persons are suffering from greater insecurity, sexual and gender-based violence and intolerable living conditions. Clashes persist despite the ceasefire announced on 4 August, exacerbating the suffering of civilians. Switzerland is particularly concerned about the M23's continued territorial expansion in North Kivu, including its establishment of a parallel administrative structure. We condemn the indiscriminate attacks by armed groups such as the Allied Democratic Forces, the Coopérative pour le développement du Congo and Zaïre. It is essential to ensure that the focus on the M23 does not overshadow the plight of the victims of violence in Ituri and elsewhere, and that accountability is ensured.

Thirdly, despite the difficult context, we will continue to support the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) so that it can play a central role in protecting civilians. The Mission can only truly fulfil its mandate if there is an end to the regular attacks and obstructions against it, including the reported jamming of communications and disinformation campaigns in North Kivu. We call on all parties to respect their obligations under international humanitarian law and to ensure the safety and security of United Nations and humanitarian personnel.

Finally, Switzerland fully supports the renewal of MONUSCO's mandate, including by maintaining the protection of civilians as a priority. Following the Mission's departure from South Kivu, it will be essential to draw concrete lessons in order to avoid a security vacuum that could further weaken the region. With that in mind, Switzerland will continue to promote an inclusive dialogue between the Democratic Republic of the Congo, MONUSCO and civil society in order to align the disengagement process with the needs of the local population.

The Congolese people must be able to live in peace, dignity and security, and their aspirations must remain at the forefront of the Security Council's priorities. Switzerland calls on the members of the Council and the States of the region to remain united in the quest

for a just and lasting peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Switzerland and its international cooperation have been active in the Great Lakes region for more than 60 years. We are determined to continue our efforts alongside the Congolese authorities and people, both in Kinshasa and in the east of the country, in order to support the peace process and contribute to sustainable development.

**Mr. Fu Cong** (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Special Representative Keita and Ms. Mubalama for their briefings. I welcome the presence of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Her Excellency Ms. Thérèse Kayikwamba Wagner, as well as the representatives of Rwanda and Angola, at today's meeting. In the light of the report of the Secretary-General (S/2024/863) and the latest developments on the ground, I would like to emphasize three points.

First, it is crucial to consolidate the momentum for a political settlement. The signing of the ceasefire agreement between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda is an important step towards easing the situation in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. China welcomes the approval of a concept of operations by the Foreign Ministers of both countries for implementing the agreement and operationalizing an ad hoc verification mechanism, and we appreciate President Lourenço of Angola's continued exercise of his good offices of under the Luanda process. Resolving differences and developing friendly and good-neighbourly relations through mutual engagement is in the long-term interests of every country in the region. We encourage the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda to consolidate the momentum in their dialogue, build mutual trust and effectively implement the ceasefire agreement. The international community should support mediation efforts by regional countries and organizations and provide constructive assistance for the implementation of the agreement.

Secondly, it is essential to address the country's security and humanitarian challenges. Some armed groups in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo have recently been frequently violating the ceasefire agreement, resulting in casualties among innocent civilians. China once again urges all armed groups to respect the spirit of the ceasefire agreement, cease their violence immediately and lay down their arms. The United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO),

the Office of the Special Envoy for the Great Lakes and other United Nations entities can continue to assist the Democratic Republic of the Congo in implementing disarmament, demobilization and reintegration projects, controlling the flow of small arms and light weapons and restoring stability. China stands ready to provide support in that regard. The international community, especially the traditional donors, should pay particular attention to the Democratic Republic of the Congo's displacement crisis and the spread of infectious diseases such as mpox, as well as the issue of food insecurity, and should scale up humanitarian financing to ease the people's plight.

Thirdly, it will be imperative to plan for the post-MONUSCO era. MONUSCO has completed its withdrawal from South Kivu, and the United Nations is assisting peacebuilding efforts in South Kivu to consolidate the gains made in the transition. China acknowledges the progress made. We encourage the Secretary-General to fully take stock of the first phase of withdrawal, strengthen communication with the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, gradually streamline MONUSCO's mandate and ensure an orderly withdrawal in accordance with the situation on the ground. United Nations entities and international partners should provide more practical support for the Democratic Republic of the Congo Government to assume security responsibilities, create favourable conditions for MONUSCO's eventual withdrawal and prevent any security vacuum.

China welcomes the recent extension of the mandate of the Southern African Development Community Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (SAMIDRC). We support the enhanced coordination and complementarity between MONUSCO and SAMIDRC and stress the need for synergy in avoiding duplication and wasting resources. Discussion is currently under way at the Council regarding MONUSCO's mandate renewal and the planning of the Mission's tasks in the next phase. China is committed to participating constructively in the relevant consultations. In the meantime, we support the continued role of MONUSCO under the leadership of Special Representative Keita in safeguarding peace and stability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

**Mr. Mikanagi** (Japan): I would like to express my gratitude to Special Representative of the Secretary-General Keita for her briefing and for her determined leadership of the United Nations Organization

Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO). I also thank Ms. Mubalama for her briefing. I welcome the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the representatives of Rwanda and Angola here today.

Japan welcomes the ongoing diplomatic efforts by the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda to advance the peace process. Significant steps have recently been taken towards putting an end to the conflict, which has plagued the local population for decades. Japan commends Angola's mediation efforts, particularly towards the development of a concept of operations for the harmonized plans on the neutralization of the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda and the disengagement of forces and the operationalization of the reinforced ad hoc verification mechanism to monitor the ceasefire. We also appreciate MONUSCO's support for operationalizing the mechanism.

While those diplomatic efforts are under way, the humanitarian situation in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo remains dire. Japan condemns any actions of armed groups that threaten the civilian population. Japan calls on them to lay down their arms and participate in the Disarmament, Demobilization, Community Recovery and Stabilization Programme. We also demand that all States refrain from providing any support to armed groups, including the Mouvement du 23 mars. Japan calls on each Government in the region to control the flow of small arms and light weapons in a responsible manner given their significant security and humanitarian impact. On that note, Japan welcomes the holding of a regional forum on small arms and light weapons in Goma from 8 to 10 October. In that context, MONUSCO's protection-of-civilians mandate remains key. The deployment of SAMIDRC is also appreciated, as it helps to create an environment conducive to the implementation of ongoing regional peace efforts. We are encouraged by the strengthened coordination between MONUSCO and SAMIDRC in line with resolution 2746 (2024). We also commend the Congolese Government's efforts towards the implementation of the provincial road map for the transition in South Kivu. Close alignment between MONUSCO, the United Nations country team, the Government and key regional and international partners is essential to bringing about lasting peace and stability.

The importance of the protection of civilians cannot be emphasized enough in the context of the

conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Japan underscores that the primary responsibility for that lies with the Congolese National Police. Through our official development assistance implementation agency, the Japan International Cooperation Agency, Japan has supported the institutionalization of community policing and police training in Kinshasa and extended that experience to Tanganyika province, where 120 officers are currently undergoing training provided through the International Organization for Migration in collaboration with the Peacebuilding Fund. That support will contribute to strengthening the rule of law and preventing the recurrence of conflict.

Japan recognizes the important role of MONUSCO in bringing peace and stability to the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We will constructively join the discussion on the extension of the Mission's mandate until our current Security Council term ends at the end of the year. Japan will continue to support peacebuilding efforts in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in order to ensure human security and that each individual will have opportunities and choices to fulfil his or her potential.

**Mr. Žbogar** (Slovenia): I thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Keita for her comprehensive briefing, and I renew our full support for the critical role of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) in protecting civilians. I also wish to thank Ms. Mubalama for her passionate testimony and for her recommendations. I welcome to today's meeting Her Excellency Minister Kayikwamba Wagner and the representatives of Rwanda and Angola.

While encouraged by positive steps to achieve sustainable peace, we remain concerned about the worsening security and humanitarian crisis in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. Deadly attacks by armed groups, particularly the Mouvement du 23 mars (M23), the Allied Democratic Forces and the Coopérative pour le développement du Congo, continue to inflict relentless suffering on civilians. The territorial expansion of M23 and its administrative control over occupied areas, including the appointment of local administrators, is deeply alarming. Slovenia strongly condemns those actions and calls on all armed groups to disarm and withdraw. The violence has exacerbated one of the world's largest displacement crises. It has worsened food insecurity and fuelled an alarming rise in sexual and gender-based violence, as



we just heard this morning. The perpetrators must be held accountable.

We call on all parties to fully respect international humanitarian and human rights law and to facilitate safe and unhindered humanitarian access. Slovenia strongly condemns any violence, threats or intimidation against humanitarian workers and emphasizes the urgent need to safeguard their operations to provide life-saving aid. Slovenia also reiterates its call for all States to cease supporting armed groups, including the M23 and the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR). We are particularly concerned about the unauthorized military presence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and we urge Rwanda to fully withdraw its forces. We call for full respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

We commend regional diplomatic initiatives aimed at achieving a sustainable political resolution, particularly through the Luanda process. Slovenia extends gratitude to President Lourenço of Angola for his leadership, dedication and continued commitment to fostering peace and stability in the region. We reaffirm our support for the Luanda and Nairobi processes, emphasizing the full and meaningful participation of women and the active engagement of youth in those efforts. We call on the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda to adhere fully to the ceasefire agreement. Reports of ceasefire violations are concerning. The operationalization of the reinforced ad hoc verification mechanism is a key milestone, as is the agreement on the concept of operations, including neutralizing the FDLR and ensuring the disengagement of forces. We commend both countries — the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda — on those important steps. It is important to build on those achievements. The announced presidential summit is an important and unique opportunity to advance those efforts. Sustained political and diplomatic engagement to address the root causes of conflict is essential. It is a precondition for long-term stability and security.

The role of MONUSCO remains indispensable. Its efforts to protect civilians, provide support for regional mechanisms and uphold peace and security are crucial. Slovenia commends the leadership of Special Representative Keita and the work of MONUSCO personnel, who continue to operate under challenging conditions. However, reports of restrictions on MONUSCO's freedom of movement and incidents of GPS jamming jeopardize both the

Mission's effectiveness and the safety of its personnel. Slovenia calls on all parties to ensure full respect for MONUSCO's mandate and to create an environment conducive to its operations.

MONUSCO's support for the Southern African Development Community Mission to the Democratic Republic of the Congo (SAMIDRC) is an important component in supporting regional efforts to foster stability and protect civilians. We underscore the importance of effective coordination between MONUSCO and SAMIDRC, as well as compliance with the United Nations Human Rights Due Diligence Policy.

In conclusion, we urge the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda to remain steadfast in the pursuit of peace and to capitalize on the opportunities provided by regional dialogue and international support.

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

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 insightful briefing and exemplary leadership of the Mission. We take note of the contribution of Ms. Passy Mubalama, founder of the Action and Development Initiative for the Protection of Women and Children. We warmly welcome the participation of Her Excellency Ms. Thérèse Kayikwamba Wagner, Minister for Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and Francophonie of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and the representatives of Rwanda and Angola in this meeting. We take note of the recent visit of the Chair accompanied by members of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1533 (2004) to Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Uganda and Rwanda and thank them for their efforts.

The frustration and distress felt by the people of eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo are palpable, and understandably so. It is therefore urgent for the international community to continue supporting the peace process and the Government of the Democratic

Republic of the Congo to address the multifaceted challenges undermining the country's stability.

In the light of the foregoing, let me highlight a few key points.

First, we reiterate our strong support for the ceasefire agreement between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda. We welcome the outcomes of the sixth ministerial meeting held in Luanda, including the approval of the concept of operation for the harmonized plans on the neutralization of the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR) and the disengagement of forces, under the mediation efforts of President of Angola João Lourenço. That is a crucial step towards resolving the long-standing crisis in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo under the Luanda process. We also commend the conclusion of the sixth ministerial meeting, which emphasizes the need for continued negotiations on the remaining aspects of the draft agreement, as submitted by President João Lourenço, and his initiative to hold a summit at the highest political level on 15 December. The launch of the revised ad hoc verification mechanism is pivotal not only for monitoring the ceasefire but also in complementing the ongoing efforts for peace in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. We fully support Angola's request for MONUSCO's assistance in that regard and welcome the signing of the memorandum of understanding between Special Representative of the Secretary-General Keita and His Excellency Mr. Tété António, Minister of External Relations of Angola.

Secondly, while the mediation efforts between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda continue under the Luanda process, the A3+ remains deeply concerned about the continued offensive of the Mouvement du 23 mars (M23) in violation of the ceasefire. We acknowledge that the issue of the proliferation of armed groups is a central aspect of the peace process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and call on all external supporters of various armed groups to cease their backing of such groups. We strongly condemn the actions of all armed groups and especially the M23's territorial expansion, including the establishment of parallel administrations in mining areas, particularly in the Rubaya mining site. The A3+ also condemns all forms of support for other armed groups, including the FDLR, the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) and the Wazalendo militia in North Kivu. We call for the reinvigoration of the Nairobi process, as the presence of more than 200 armed groups in the

Democratic Republic of the Congo is a grave threat not only to the country but also to regional stability in the Great Lakes.

Thirdly, we express our continued support for the work of MONUSCO and call on all parties to respect the Mission's mandate. We remain alarmed by the continued restrictions on MONUSCO's freedom of movement and mandated activities and call for MONUSCO to be allowed to carry out its mandate without further hindrance. We express our support and urge MONUSCO to continue its coordination with the Southern African Development Community Mission to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in line with resolution 2746 (2024), as part of the efforts to ensure that peace and stability are restored to the region.

We express our deep concern about the protection of civilians in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We urge all parties to ensure the safety and security of innocent civilian lives and to fully comply with international humanitarian law.

In conclusion, we call on all members of the Security Council to engage constructively in the upcoming discussions on the renewal of MONUSCO's mandate.

**Mr. Polyanskiy** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ms. Bintou Keita, for her briefing. We listened attentively to the statement delivered by the representative of the civil society, Ms. Passy Mubalama. We welcome the participation of the Minister for Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and Francophonie of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ms. Thérèse Kayikwamba Wagner, and the representatives of Rwanda and Angola.

We would like to begin our statement today with praise for the positive momentum and the results of the negotiations on the Luanda platform. We note in particular the personal role played by President of Angola João Lourenço. We are convinced that direct and candid dialogue, with Angolan mediation, provides a real opportunity for the stakeholders to reach a sustainable and viable political solution to the crisis. In that sense, we attach great hope in the upcoming meeting between the Presidents of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda at the end of this week.

At the same time, we would like to reiterate the need to take practical measures to put an end to any State interaction with illegal armed groups. It is obvious that without such steps it will not be possible to achieve a sustainable and long-term agreement on the settlement of the entire set of problems plaguing the east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

In that regard, we view as more necessary than ever the relaunching of the Nairobi process under the auspices of the East African Community or the launch of similar regional initiatives to seek solutions to sensitive issues related to the issue of the illegal armed groups. We trust that the Southern African Development Community (SADC) troops will continue to make a direct contribution to the pan-African efforts to stabilize the situation. We agree with the Secretary-General that United Nations assistance to SADC forces, in accordance with resolution 2746 (2024), has an important role to play in ensuring the necessary conditions on the ground for diplomacy to succeed.

We support the efforts undertaken by the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) and its leadership to ensure peace and the protection of civilians. We express our deep appreciation to the peacekeepers and troop-contributing countries.

In determining the next steps after the Mission has fully withdrawn from South Kivu, we believe it is necessary, first and foremost, to do everything possible to prevent a security vacuum. We share our colleagues' view of the importance of taking into account the evolution of the situation on the ground and taking flexible, balanced decisions. The Mission's drawdown process must be conducted in a phased and responsible manner, taking into account the capacity of the Congolese authorities to assume responsibility for order and security on the ground. Forcing MONUSCO's drawdown process is unacceptable.

At the same time, it is important that the Security Council be provided with all the information necessary to adapt the Mission's mandate to the current situation. In that sense, it is difficult to overemphasize the clearly stated official position of the host country. We also hope that the United Nations Secretariat, in coordination with Kinshasa, will specify its recommendations to the Council on further parameters for the transition.

The Russian Federation, as a permanent member of the Security Council, will continue to contribute to

efforts to resolving the crisis in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. We are in favour of resolving all conflict exclusively through political and diplomatic means, taking into account the fundamental interests of all stakeholders. The people of the region and the civilians of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, first and foremost, deserve the establishment of long-awaited peace and stability on their soil.

**Ms. Gatt** (Malta): I would like to thank Ms. Keita, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, and Ms. Passy Mubalama for their insightful briefings. I welcome the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the representatives of Rwanda and Angola to this meeting.

As we address the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo for the last time as a member of the Council, Malta acknowledges that a number of pivotal developments have taken place. We have witnessed an evolving security landscape across the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in the transition of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), including the completion of its withdrawal from South Kivu and its support to the Southern African Development Community Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in North Kivu. The ceasefire agreement between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda, through the mediation of President Lourenço of Angola, is a notable step forward. We commend the launch of the reinforced ad hoc verification mechanism and the signing of a memorandum of understanding for its operationalization. We also value MONUSCO's role in those efforts.

Yet, despite considerable efforts across all levels, the security and humanitarian situation in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo continues to deteriorate at an alarming rate. Armed groups, such as the Allied Democratic Forces, the Cooperative for Development of the Congo and Zaïre/FPAC continue to commit serious violations and abuses in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. We condemn those actions and urge them to disarm. The expansion of the Movement du 23 mars (M23) remains deeply concerning. The group's territorial advances and the appointment of administrators in areas under its control are outright violations of the sovereignty of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Malta categorically condemns those actions. We reiterate that any form of external support to M23 and other armed groups

operating in the country must cease immediately. That also applies to the presence of foreign military forces in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The country's natural resources must remain under its control.

Malta reaffirms its unwavering support for the Group of Experts supporting the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1533 (2004), concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Their rigorous investigations continue to provide the Council with important and impartial analysis.

Malta is also concerned about recurring incidents of GPS jamming and spoofing that have disrupted MONUSCO's operations, including incidents that suspended critical flight operations. Those incidents have also disrupted the provision of aid by humanitarian actors and has made access more cumbersome. Aid for the most in need is being delayed. These deliberate interferences are unacceptable and must stop. We call for swift accountability in that regard.

The latest report (S/2024/863) lays bare the devastating humanitarian crisis in North Kivu, where internally displaced persons (IDPs) are trapped in militarized zones, subjected to violence and being denied human dignity. We deplore the rise in sexual and gender-based violence. Women and girls endure daily exposure to rape and sexual violence, as we heard from our briefers today.

During last month's visit by the Sanctions Committee to Goma, we heard first-hand accounts of the high level of violence. No one is safe — least of all children, young girls and women, who are accepting this violence as a grim routine to protect their families. This suffering cannot be normalized; it must stop. What was especially sad was that some IDPs believe that narrating their personal experiences were only "empty words", as nothing will change. We cannot let this suffering be ignored.

Violations of international humanitarian law, including attacks on aid workers, have reached alarming levels. That is unacceptable. On child protection measures, Malta commends MONUSCO's support to the efforts of the Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo to verify and exclude children from recruitment. We reiterate our call for robust child protection mechanisms, particularly in transition contexts, and strongly encourage that lessons learned from South Kivu guide future transitions.

We also recognize MONUSCO's pivotal role in supporting the authorities in the justice system and security sector reform. As requested in resolution 2594 (2021), gender-responsive analysis and technical gender expertise must be integrated into all aspects of MONUSCO's transition in order to ensure that the needs of women are fully integrated in all prioritized and sequenced stages.

As the Council approaches negotiations for the renewal of MONUSCO's mandate, Malta will prioritize strengthening civilian protection, ensuring robust child protection measures and ensuring that priority is given to the women and peace and security agenda.

In conclusion, Malta will continue to advocate the genuine commitment of all parties to the Luanda process, including through the establishment of a platform for gender experts and the meaningful participation of women as mediators. That is important to supporting ongoing regional political efforts and revitalizing the Nairobi process. Malta remains resolute in its commitment to advancing peace and stability for the Congolese people.

**Mr. Kariuki** (United Kingdom): I thank Ms. Keita, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, and Ms. Mubalama for their briefings today. I welcome the participation of Foreign Minister Kayikwamba Wagner of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as well as the representatives of Rwanda and Angola, in our meeting.

The United Kingdom welcomes the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the continued collaboration of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) in tackling conflict in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. We are working closely with our Council colleagues to agree a mandate that sufficiently addresses the need for the protection of civilians, facilitation of humanitarian activity and support for wider peacebuilding activities.

The United Kingdom is seriously concerned about reports of GPS spoofing and jamming and the presence of surface-to-air missiles in North Kivu, alongside the restriction of MONUSCO's movements by the Movement du 23 mars (M23), preventing troop rotations and the delivery of critical supplies. We continue to call on all parties to the conflict to cease all obstruction of MONUSCO, which prevent the full implementation of the mandate agreed by the Council.



More than a quarter of a million people have been displaced since August as a result of M23 illegally expanding its territory in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. We reiterate calls for full respect of the territorial integrity of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and condemn, once again, the actions of all armed groups.

The humanitarian situation remains dire, with more than 7 million displaced and unacceptable numbers of civilians affected by disease, food insecurity, sexual violence and the lack of basic services. A lack of access to vulnerable populations has compounded the challenges faced by humanitarian actors. We call on all parties to the conflict to respect international law, prioritize civilian welfare and permit access for humanitarian actors.

Finally, the United Kingdom is deeply appreciative of Angola's continued mediation efforts and President Lourenço's personal commitment to the Luanda process. We are heartened by the recent progress and agreement by the Foreign Ministers of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda on a concept of operations. We call on all sides to show leadership, engage in good faith and deliver on their commitments.

**The President:** I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of the United States.

Let me begin by thanking Ms. Keita, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for her briefing today, and, more importantly, for her strong and effective leadership of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO). I also thank Ms. Mubalama for her impactful statement and for strongly amplifying the voices of women and children and victims of this horrible conflict. I would also like to welcome the Foreign Minister of the Democratic Republic of the Congo back to the Council for her briefing. I welcome the participation of the Permanent Representatives of Rwanda and Angola in today's meeting.

The United States looks forward to working with the Council on the renewal of MONUSCO's mandate. As armed groups continue to destabilize the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, it is critical that Congolese authorities leverage all tools, including MONUSCO, to protect their people and their country's territorial integrity. We therefore appreciate the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo's continued support to MONUSCO and its

perspective, both on the Mission's renewal and on a gradual and flexible approach to its drawdown. Right now, MONUSCO remains well positioned to do what peacekeeping missions do best, which is to create space for peace processes and protect civilians in the meantime.

Over the next year, the Mission will continue to play an important role in supporting the Luanda process, including the now-operational reinforced ad hoc verification mechanism and the diplomatic talks between Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, both enabled by Angola's strong leadership. We urge both parties to honour the ceasefire and direct the armed groups aligned with them to do the same. On that note, we are alarmed by recent violations of the ceasefire that the Mouvement du 23 mars (M23) has carried out on a pretext of taking defensive action, and which have been supported by Rwanda Defence Force (RDF) troops. Those actions and the RDF's endorsement of them must end. Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo agreed on what is required. The Democratic Republic of the Congo must take action against the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda and cease supporting it. Rwanda must withdraw its more than 4,000 troops from the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and end its support for the M23. In addition, MONUSCO must be allowed to implement its mandate. We call on Rwanda to immediately remove its surface-to-air missile systems from North Kivu and cease its GPS signal interference. Those obstacles have effectively grounded MONUSCO's air operations, not to mention endangering the lives of United Nations and humanitarian personnel and countless civilians.

Moreover, MONUSCO personnel must be able to operate without threats from the M23, which are limiting the Mission's movement, troop rotations and resupply. We also call on Ugandan bilateral forces to help MONUSCO's Force Intervention Brigade ensure that it can move freely and conduct unilateral offensive operations against their shared enemy, the Islamic State of Iraq and the Sham—Democratic Republic of the Congo (ISIS-DRC), also known as the Allied Democratic Forces. MONUSCO can and should leverage the Force Intervention Brigade's unique mandate to neutralize ISIS-DRC forces. For that to happen, we need the countries contributing troops to the Brigade to deploy soldiers ready and willing to carry out those mandated tasks.

While MONUSCO continues its essential operations, including life-saving efforts to protect civilians in Ituri, the Mission must also continue on the path to a sustainable and responsible withdrawal. We commend MONUSCO and the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo for their work to revise the withdrawal plans so that they better reflect the conditions on the ground, especially with regard to the risk to civilians. The Security Council must continue to review the plans as they are updated and stay informed through regular reporting. The public, too, should be aware of the updates. We encourage the Democratic Republic of the Congo authorities to clearly communicate changes that are made to the tempo or approach of the withdrawal. Confusion and ambiguity breed mis- and disinformation about MONUSCO's status, sowing seeds for popular unrest and even violence targeting peacekeepers.

Finally, we welcome MONUSCO's training of the leadership of the Southern African Development Community Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (SAMIDRC) on human rights and other essential areas, as authorized under resolution 2746 (2024). We urge MONUSCO to prioritize training SAMIDRC on the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse, and we encourage SAMIDRC to take the action necessary to ensure that its troops conduct themselves in line with the United Nations zero-tolerance policy. For its part, the United States supports retaining the current levels of support for SAMIDRC while the operationalization of resolution 2746 (2024) continues.

In conclusion, the progress made towards peace through the Luanda process, supported by MONUSCO's continued deployment, presents an opportunity to end the crisis once and for all and the widespread suffering that it has caused. Let us work with purpose to meet the moment.

I resume my functions as President of the Council.

I now give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and Francophonie of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

**Ms. Kayikwamba Wagner** (Democratic Republic of the Congo) (*spoke in French*): Allow me to congratulate the United States on its presidency for December and commend the leadership of Secretary-General António Guterres and the extraordinary commitment of 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 (MONUSCO). I also thank Ms. Mubalama for her briefing, which was of interest to all of us. On the eve of the renewal of MONUSCO's mandate, we are meeting at a crucial time to take stock of a crisis that demands clear-sightedness and determination, and I am counting on the Security Council and its deliberations to ensure action on the urgent challenges concerning us all.

The report of the Secretary-General of 29 November (S/2024/863), before the Council, describes an extremely worrisome security situation in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. The reports of the Group of Experts of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1533 (2004) concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo have confirmed flagrant violations of our sovereignty. More than 4,000 members of the Rwanda Defence Force, illegally present on our territory, are carrying out offensive actions with the support of the Mouvement du 23 mars (M23). Those actions constitute a planned and premeditated aggression in clear violation of the Charter of the United Nations, the Constitutive Act of the African Union and fundamental principles of international law. The consequences have been overwhelming.

The Kishishe massacre of 29 November 2022 epitomized the atrocities, with summary executions and rapes of civilians. In May we also saw the bombing of the Mugunga camp for internally displaced persons, which killed at least 35 civilians, most of them women and children, and just yesterday, Sunday, 8 December, the bombing of the Bungeni school in Luofu, in Lubero territory. The violence has led to massive displacement. Almost three of every four cases of displacement in the Democratic Republic of the Congo this year have been linked to the conflict with Rwanda and the M23, exacerbating an already-tragic humanitarian crisis. The intentional displacement of civilians, combined with the M23's illegitimate appointment of traditional and territorial authorities, reflects a clear desire to redraw the demographic composition of the areas under their control. Such practices, which are akin to ethnic cleansing, are aimed at establishing lasting control while at the same time undermining existing social and cultural structures and exacerbating local tensions. As if that were not enough, Rwanda has also targeted the peacekeeping forces of MONUSCO and the Southern African Development Community. And yet Rwanda continues to describe all those acts as

“defensive measures”. But there is nothing defensive about bombing camps for internally displaced persons, illegally occupying a foreign country or plundering its natural resources. It is not Rwanda’s words but its actions that clearly spell out its position.

In order to end the war, my country has resolutely committed to the Luanda process through the good offices of President João Lourenço of Angola. Within that framework, the Democratic Republic of the Congo has made a firm commitment to neutralizing the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda, as set forth in the concept of operations adopted in Luanda on 25 November, whereby Rwanda itself committed to withdrawing its troops from the sovereign territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. On 5 November in Goma, I and the Foreign Ministers of Angola and Rwanda launched the reinforced ad hoc verification mechanism, mandated to monitor the ceasefire, which came into force on 4 August. Made up of 18 Angolan experts and 3 Congolese and Rwandan experts, that mechanism represented a key stage in implementing the commitments made. However, since its creation, the Rwandan experts have not taken up their duties. For 34 days now, the operation of that mechanism has been hampered, casting doubt on Rwanda’s willingness to honour its commitments. During that time, Rwanda and the M23 have systematically continued to violate the ceasefire, while deliberately paralysing the mechanism in order to avoid any responsibility. Faced with those alarming realities, it is imperative that the Council remain mobilized in its support for the Luanda process and demand that the parties respect their commitments.

With that in mind, the renewal of MONUSCO’s mandate must necessarily reflect the regional dimension of the conflict, while maintaining a conditional and responsible approach to its gradual withdrawal. That is essential to address cross-border threats and ensure that no security vacuum is left behind. In that respect, the Democratic Republic of the Congo welcomes resolution 2746 (2024), which recognizes the central role of the Southern African Development Community in regional stabilization. The Southern African Development Community Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, mandated within that framework, is a strategic pillar that strengthens joint efforts to protect civilians and combat cross-border threats.

However, those challenges require even closer coordination between MONUSCO and the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great

Lakes Region. It is crucial that the Office, the remit of which must be strengthened, assume a central role in the management of cross-border dynamics. Such a development would enable MONUSCO to focus its efforts on particularly critical areas in North Kivu and Ituri, while ensuring an integrated and coherent regional response by the entire United Nations system.

The gradual transfer of security responsibilities to the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (FARDC) will have to be accompanied by joint planning with the provincial integrated transition teams and the Congolese Government. Similarly, United Nations agencies must continue to gradually assume responsibility for development and humanitarian assistance.

Finally, MONUSCO must continue its partnership with the Democratic Republic of the Congo in the context of the Disarmament, Demobilization, Community Recovery and Stabilization Programme by helping to ensure that those initiatives are sustainable and transparent. The renewal of the mandate represents a crucial opportunity to learn from past approaches while responding to current realities. Explicit recognition of the international dimensions of the conflict, coupled with a coordinated transition, will consolidate the gains made and ensure that MONUSCO leaves a lasting legacy for peace and security.

South Kivu offers a concrete example of the opportunities and challenges associated with MONUSCO’s withdrawal. A joint evaluation mission in December revealed significant progress — effective deployment of the FARDC, activation of the transferred bases and establishment of early warning mechanisms to protect civilians. Those results illustrate that a responsible withdrawal, when the conditions are right, can strengthen the stability and resilience of communities. However, sensitive areas such as Kalehe and Fizi remain exposed to persistent threats from armed groups, exacerbating the risk of human rights violations. Those challenges underline the importance of close coordination between the Congolese Government and its partners. The Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo remains firmly committed to overcoming those challenges, mobilizing more than \$30 million to support that transition in addition to the \$23 million in support from the United Nations. That commitment reflects our determination to strengthen the authority of the State and to guarantee the lasting stability of the liberated areas.

The lessons learned in South Kivu will guide the planning of future disengagements, with particular emphasis on assessing local conditions, strengthening coordination with the FARDC and increasing support for community initiatives to ensure a smooth and sustainable transition. The progress made in South Kivu shows that, despite the challenges, solutions can emerge when political will, international cooperation and local commitment converge. Those lessons show that peace and stability are possible, but that they require sustained effort and shared responsibility. The Democratic Republic of the Congo remains resolutely committed to peace, based on the principles of dialogue and multilateralism. However, that quest for peace cannot be achieved at the expense of our sovereignty, the security of our citizens or the dignity of our people.

In the face of persistent challenges, collective and decisive action is essential. To make progress towards lasting peace, we call on the Council to provide MONUSCO with the necessary and proportionate resources to fully guarantee the implementation of its mandate, in particular in its critical role of protecting civilians, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and security sector reform. The Council must condemn and impose sanctions for Rwanda's violations of the sovereignty of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, including its military incursions, support for the M23 and attacks on civilians and peacekeeping forces. The Council must explicitly note the regional dimension of the conflict in the operative paragraphs of MONUSCO's next mandate, in order to better address cross-border threats, pending the improvement of the mandate of the Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region. The Council must initiate a sequenced and responsible disengagement plan for MONUSCO, which is adapted to local realities and minimizes the risks in vulnerable areas. Coordination between MONUSCO, the FARDC and regional mechanisms must be strengthened to ensure the lasting protection of civilians and the effective stabilization of liberated areas. Finally, the Council must ensure rigorous monitoring and increased accountability within the Luanda process, including through existing mechanisms such as the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1533 (2004) concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Those actions are not just a moral obligation — they are essential to guarantee stability and security in the

Great Lakes region. Today the Council has the historic opportunity and responsibility to take concrete steps to address the crisis. The Democratic Republic of the Congo expects clear and resolute support to restore peace, protect civilian populations and preserve an international order based on justice and sovereignty.

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

**Mr. Rwamucyo (Rwanda):** Allow me to begin by congratulating you, Madam President, on your presidency and stewardship of the Council. I recognize the participation of the honourable Thérèse Kayikwamba Wagner, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and the representative of Angola. I also extend my gratitude to the previous speakers for their contributions and to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ms. Bintou Keita, for her briefing. I thank also the civil society briefer, Ms. Passy Mubalama.

The Great Lakes region of Africa has immense potential, driven by vibrant interconnected communities, cultural connections and tremendous opportunities for growth. However, the ongoing conflict, fuelled by both local and foreign armed groups, continues to undermine that potential. Achieving lasting peace is essential for the stability of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, its neighbours and the entire region. That requires moving beyond oversimplified narratives and addressing the root causes of conflict.

Framing this as intra-African hostility detracts from the complexity of the conflict and the roles of various actors involved. This is not a Democratic Republic of the Congo-Rwanda issue, but a multifaceted crisis that demands nuanced understanding and coordinated action from the international community. Regional initiatives such as those led by the African Union, the East African Community (EAC) and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region play a critical role in fostering dialogue for peace and cooperation. Rwanda is committed to those initiatives and believes that collective regional efforts, alongside international support, are critical to resolving the underlying causes of conflict in our region.

In the spirit of finding a durable solution to the ongoing conflict in the region, the recent EAC summit recognized the need to harmonize the two peace processes, namely the Luanda and Nairobi processes. That decision was made to ensure a viable solution for



all parties involved. Rwanda hopes that the Council will support the regional efforts and work to avoid parallel forums, which could complicate the situation and undermine the prospects for a unified, sustainable solution.

Rwanda has taken note of the Secretary-General's report (S/2024/863) and joins Council members in deploring the magnitude of the human suffering and the growing humanitarian crisis caused by the conflict in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. However, the report has major deficiencies, with implications for the quality of the Council's deliberations, and is undermining the focus on the quest for the peace that we all aspire to achieve. The tone and narrative of the report create the impression that the Mouvement du 23 mars (M23) is at the root of the conflict in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. Some Council members have seized on that narrative to focus blame on that group. The conflict is premised on the marginalization of minority communities, including the Congolese Tutsi, in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. That misinterpretation by some Council members of the conflict's root cause is reinforcing the Democratic Republic of the Congo's intransigence with regard to finding a viable political solution to it.

The report fails to fully acknowledge that peace is more prevalent in the areas controlled by the M23 than in the areas under the coalition led by the Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo (FARDC), which among others is composed of Burundian forces, the genocidal Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR), armed groups such as Nyatura, Wazalendo, the Coalition des patriotes résistants congolais (PARECO) and European mercenaries. Indeed, the report acknowledges some of the atrocities committed by that coalition, which are all documented in it. It is deeply concerning that the report completely ignores the killings, ethnic cleansing, forced displacement, denials of inherent citizen's rights and hate speech targeting Kinyarwanda-speaking Congolese, especially Congolese Tutsi. Hundreds of thousands of Congolese Rwandophones have been displaced and forced into perpetual refugee status in neighbouring countries. That goes to the heart of the existence of the M23, which is fighting to support their rights.

In addition, there is no mention of the painful loss of life, homes, livestock and livelihoods resulting from the indiscriminate heavy-artillery bombing of

populated areas by the FARDC, the Southern African Development Community Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Burundian forces and European mercenaries, mostly in the Masisi, Rutshuru and Nyiragongo areas. The targeted areas are mostly those populated by Kinyarwanda-speaking Congolese. The report's deafening silence on the plight of Kinyarwanda-speaking Congolese, who are facing ethnic cleansing, risks becoming an indelible stain on the reputation of some of the Security Council's most powerful actors, who have chosen to pursue their national interests in the Democratic Republic of the Congo at the expense of persecuted women, children and minorities. We believe that such actors are capable both of protecting their own interests and speaking out for those who face persecution and ethnic cleansing. International humanitarian law and morality demand that we speak up for those minorities.

The security situation in Ituri and Beni and the magnitude of the atrocities, human rights violations and human losses caused by the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) and the Coopérative pour le développement du Congo (CODECO) are well documented but for some reason underreported. The ADF and CODECO alone account for the worst atrocities and human rights violations. The situation in Ituri and Beni is extremely bleak, yet the deliberations in the Council create the impression that the conflict in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo is largely centred in North Kivu and mostly around the Goma area. I would like to emphasize that more than 250 domestic and 14 foreign armed groups, documented in the December 2023 official report on the Disarmament, Demobilization, Community Recovery and Stabilization Programme of the Government of the Democratic Republic are at the heart of the conflict and insecurity in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. That problem needs to be comprehensively addressed.

Rwanda's primary concern is the coalition between the FARDC and the FDLR and its splinter groups, a genocidal force that continues to destabilize the region. The report on the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) ignores that pertinent security concern for Rwanda. The FDLR, a genocidal militia that is under sanctions imposed by the United Nations and United States, includes perpetrators of the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda and is the longest-standing foreign armed group in the eastern Democratic

Republic of the Congo. That outfit is at the centre of the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and has been pivotal to the creation and existence of several other armed groups. Some Mai-Mai armed groups, such as Nyatura and PARECO, were created to support it and have become its proxies.

Over the past three decades the FDLR has consistently committed acts of ethnic cleansing, sexual violence and large-scale human rights violations in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. Its neutralization and complete disengagement from the FARDC will be key to finding a sustainable solution to the conflict. The report appears to equate the M23, whose legitimate causes have been ignored by the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, with the genocidal FDLR, which deserves neutralization, disarmament and repatriation to Rwanda and whose genocidal ideology has spilled over into the Congolese population and is shared with its proxies such as Nyatura, PARECO, various Wazalendo groups and other allied groups in this conflict.

The report misrepresents the Luanda process, portraying the ceasefire as between Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which is not the case. The spirit of the Luanda process needs to be clearly understood and taken in the right context, or its implementation will be frustrated, as has happened with previous initiatives. As part of the Luanda process, a concept of operations was signed by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Angola at their sixth ministerial meeting, held on 25 November in Luanda. The concept of operations provides for neutralizing the genocidal FDLR group, for verifying the ceasefire between the conflicting parties and for lifting Rwanda's defensive measures. The lifting of Rwanda's defensive measures is very important, as they concern our border with the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Rwanda welcomes MONUSCO's support for the reinforced ad hoc verification mechanism, as provided for in the memorandum of understanding signed on 23 November in Luanda by Angola's Minister for External Relations, Mr. Tête António, and Special Representative Bintou Keita. The reinforced ad hoc verification mechanism, made up of 18 Angolan, three Democratic Republic of the Congo and three Rwandan military officials, was launched on 5 November in Goma to monitor the implementation of the concept of operations. I want to clarify that the Rwandan team

was to cross this morning, 9 December, but was told by Lieutenant-General Nassone João, commander of the reinforced ad hoc verification mechanism, to wait to cross until he comes back from Rwanda to Goma. They were not hesitant to go but have been waiting for the instruction to cross. They were supposed to go today but will have to go as instructed by the Lieutenant-General. Moreover, the tripartite summit of the Heads of State of Angola, Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo is scheduled to be held in Luanda on 15 December.

As part of the regional initiatives, the recently concluded EAC Heads of State Summit of 30 November called for merging the Luanda and Nairobi peace processes to find a comprehensive solution to the crisis in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. The Luanda peace process seeks to address the security concerns between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda, specifically with regard to the FDLR, while the Nairobi process seeks dialogue between the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and local armed groups. Combining those two processes will be key to achieving stability in the region and should be given a chance to happen. Rwanda calls on the international community and the Council to continue supporting those regional processes as the most viable path to a sustainable solution to the insecurity in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. It is therefore important to give that initiative a chance to succeed.

However, as the regional initiatives take shape, Rwanda is concerned about the persistent hostile posture, inflammatory statements and repeated threats about regime change by the Government and leadership of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which are stoking tensions and risk derailing the positive steps that have been made. Most recently, during his visit to Katanga on 17 November, President Félix-Antoine Tshisekedi Tshilombo threatened to attack Rwanda if he is allowed to amend the Constitution of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. That reinforces his previous statements about causing regime change in Rwanda. In addition, the Minister for Justice of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mr. Constant Mutamba, while addressing inmates at Muzenze prison in Goma, vowed to hunt down the President of Rwanda. Those inflammatory remarks are not reflected in the report, yet they are critical to understanding the security threats that Rwanda faces.

On 30 July, a ceasefire was agreed between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the parties to the conflict in Rwanda, facilitated by the Angolan authorities, which entered into force on 4 August. The ceasefire had largely held, but recent multiple violations by the FARDC and allied groups have compelled the M23 to respond in self-defence in what the report portrays to be an expansion of territory. The Council should prevail upon the parties concerned to respect the ceasefire, rather than condemning one party.

As we have repeatedly said, there is no military solution to the conflict in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. The FARDC's continued amassing of all sorts of troops in its support will only cause further chaos, mayhem and suffering of innocent civilians. That is already evident in the prevailing violence and insecurity, especially in the city of Goma.

Allow me to clarify one issue regarding the false narrative of mineral exploitation. The issue of minerals and Congolese wealth is always mentioned as being the cause of the conflict. Mineral exploitation is meant to distract the attention of the international community from the real issues and the root causes of the conflict. Rwanda sits on the same geological rock as the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, and all the minerals found there are also found in Rwanda. The areas close to Rwanda are rich in the famous "three Ts" of tin, tungsten and tantalum, as well as gold, with which Rwanda is also abundantly endowed. Other minerals, such as diamonds in Mbuji-Mayi and copper and cobalt in Katanga, are located thousands of kilometres within the Democratic Republic of the Congo, far away from the border with Rwanda.

Therefore, is Rwanda the one exploiting them to the extent of impoverishing the Democratic Republic of the Congo? Certainly not. The history of mining in Rwanda dates back to the 1930s, when the Belgians, as colonists, started mining in Rwanda. The mining industry continues to grow to date, thanks to advanced technology and investments in the sector. In addition, since 2012, Rwanda has been tagging and certifying its minerals right from the mining concessions to ensure international traceability. The only solution to address their illegal exploitation in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo is to put in place infrastructure, laws and trade regulations — none of which can be realized without peace. We should therefore commit ourselves to peace.

Rwanda notes with concern the reported presence of GPS jamming and spoofing that is affecting the land and air assets of the United Nations security management system. The area mentioned is close to Rwanda and poses an equally significant security threat to us. We are gravely concerned by the continued heavy militarization and proliferation of sophisticated weaponry, coupled with uncoordinated operations by armed groups in the area. We hope that the work of the reinforced ad hoc verification mechanism will shed light on those concerns.

Before I conclude, I would like to emphasize that Rwanda recognizes regional initiatives that seek a comprehensive approach to the conflict in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. Rwanda appeals to the Council to give those initiatives a chance to materialize without the influence of foreign actors who benefit from the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region at large being unstable. I therefore wish to highlight and emphasize four key points that are crucial to resolving the current conflict in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo.

First, the Democratic Republic of the Congo must own its internal problems. The M23, who are largely Kinyarwanda-speaking Congolese, are Congolese citizens, and their citizenship rights cannot be denied. Their grievances must be addressed by their Government.

Secondly, the Luanda and Nairobi peace processes should be given a chance to materialize. The Democratic Republic of the Congo must disengage with the FDLR, a genocidal terrorist armed group that poses an existential threat to Rwanda. The FDLR and its splinter groups are currently embedded within the Congolese army, the FARDC, and are armed and supported by the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Thirdly, the Congolese refugees who have been in refugee camps in neighbouring countries for many years should be repatriated. That requires comprehensive measures that address the root causes of their displacement.

Fourthly and finally, Rwanda is fully committed to improving relations with the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We recognize that good relations between our two countries are in the best interests of our people and the region.

In conclusion, Rwanda remains resolute in its commitment to peaceful solutions and regional cooperation. With collective will and decisive action, we can unlock the immense potential of the Great Lakes region and build a future defined by stability and shared prosperity.

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

**Mr. Luemba** (Angola): Allow us to begin by congratulating the United States of America on its presidency and able stewardship of the Council, including its consultations with the wider membership on developing the Council's programme of work for this month. We acknowledge with satisfaction the participation of Her Excellency Ms. Thérèse Kayikwamba Wagner of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and of Ambassador Ernest Rwamucyo of Rwanda in this meeting. We welcome the presence of Special Representative of the Secretary-General Bintou Keita and thank her for her comprehensive briefing today. We also extend our words of appreciation to Ms. Passy Mubalama as a representative of civil society.

We thank the Security Council and all speakers for expressing their firm support for the ongoing mediation efforts led by His Excellency Mr. João Manuel Gonçalves Lourenço, President of the Republic of Angola, through the Luanda process. We particularly thank the Council for its statement to the press of 25 October, in which the Council expressed its unwavering support for the Rwanda process and for President Lourenço.

We commend Ambassador Michael Kanu of Sierra Leone, in his capacity as Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1533 (2004) concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo, for leading the Committee's visit to Angola from 15 to 16 November. That visit was an important step to engage directly with Angolan authorities, including President Lourenço. We highly value the outcome of that visit in deepening relations between Angola and the Security Council.

We take this opportunity to once again reaffirm Angola's commitment to continue working towards achieving lasting peace and stability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Great Lakes region. The personal engagement of His Excellency Mr. João Manuel Gonçalves Lourenço as a mediator mandated by the African Union to assist in resolving the diplomatic crisis between the Democratic Republic of the Congo

and Rwanda is an unequivocal demonstration of the importance that the issues of peace and stability represent to my country and to the continent.

In that regard, allow us to share some key developments in the Luanda process to de-escalate tensions and re-establish a climate of mutual trust and cooperation between the two countries.

Following a set of expert meetings, Angola hosted the sixth ministerial meeting between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda on 25 November. The meeting approved the concept of operations, a strategic document that sets out the modalities for the implementation of the harmonized plan for the neutralization of the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda, the disengagement of forces and the lifting of Rwanda's defensive measures.

On 1 November, President Lourenço appointed Brigadier General Daniel Savihemba as the second commander of the reinforced ad hoc verification mechanism, which was launched in Goma on 5 November by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda and Angola. The full operationalization of that mechanism represents a meaningful step forward in ensuring close monitoring of the concept of operations and the ceasefire, as well as full compliance with the agreed security measures.

As some Council members have mentioned, as a result of the personal engagement among the Heads of State of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda and Angola, a tripartite summit is scheduled to take place in Luanda on 15 December under the auspices of President Lourenço, with a view to taking further steps to accelerate the efforts to advance stability and peace in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. The summit will represent the culmination of a series of mediation initiatives aimed at achieving peace, stability and economic development in the region. Angola is optimistic about the progress made so far and is encouraged by the high level of commitment shown by the two countries concerned throughout the negotiation process. However, we want to once again make it clear that the mediator's efforts will succeed only if all the parties concerned and the relevant stakeholders, including the Security Council, continue to support the process with a view to ensuring an environment in the region that is conducive to security and stability.



Before I conclude, I would like to share information about two other important initiatives undertaken by the Government of Angola to contribute to peace and stability in the region. On 18 and 19 October, Angola hosted the High-Level Regional Forum of Women of the Great Lakes Region in Luanda, aimed at promoting the greater involvement of women in the ongoing peace process in the Great Lakes region. And on 23 November, Angola signed a memorandum of understanding with the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as part of our commitment to engaging with our Organization to support the operationalization of the reinforced ad hoc verification mechanism.

In conclusion, we would like to underline that the initiatives and diplomatic engagements carried out during 2024 with a view to restoring peace, security, stability and sustainable development in the region will need our continued support, joint commitment and resolve in order to preserve the current ceasefire, ensure the full operationalization of the reinforced ad hoc verification mechanism, continue to build confidence measures to deepen mutual trust between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda and ensure the continued support of the international community, particularly the African Union, the United Nations and its Security Council, as well as that of the regional actors in the Luanda and Nairobi processes.

**The President:** The representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo has asked for the floor to make a further statement. I now give her the floor.

**Ms. Kayikwamba Wagner** (Democratic Republic of the Congo) (*spoke in French*): I thank you, Madam President, for giving me the floor again. I will be brief, but I want to respond as clearly and firmly as possible to the statements made by the Permanent Representative of Rwanda.

First of all, let me be clear. I am not blaming Rwanda for all the ills of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I blame Rwanda for the illegal presence of its troops on our territory, the Kishishe massacre, the bombing of the Mugunga camp for internally displaced persons, the systematic plundering of our natural resources and the attacks on United Nations and Southern African Development Community peacekeepers. I am therefore blaming Rwanda for those violations of the Charter of the United Nations. Those acts are all crimes. They are

not the result of some misunderstanding or bilateral dispute. The facts are not speculation. They are documented, corroborated by and enshrined in United Nations reports.

Nevertheless, I take note of Rwanda's position, which casts doubt on the objectivity of United Nations experts. Rwanda claims that the Democratic Republic of the Congo is threatened by numerous armed groups. Yes, that is a fact, but Rwanda's acknowledgement of the complexity of our security situation cannot justify its own violations of our sovereignty. The fact that other challenges exist does not excuse Rwanda's support for the Mouvement du 23 mars (M23) or the presence of its troops in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Let me be very clear. Rwanda's acknowledgement of our internal challenges gives it no right to intervene.

Rwanda also asserted that the M23 represents marginalized communities. I would like to ask the Security Council a simple question — since when have massacres, forced displacement and the demographic reorganization of land been considered legitimate means for responding to ethnic or social demands? The M23 is not defending any cause but rather executing a strategy dictated by Rwanda's interests. As the Group of Experts of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1533 (2004) concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo has shown, the aim of the M23 is not to defend minorities but to control resources and weaken the sovereignty of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Finally, Rwanda claims that the actions that it calls "defensive" have been deemed legitimate by statements made by Congolese officials. I firmly reject that allegation. No words of any kind can justify the massacre of civilians, the pillaging of resources or the occupation of territories. Nothing, absolutely nothing can legitimize war crimes, crimes against humanity or violations of the Charter. I want to say to the representative of Rwanda that he should make no mistake. Rwanda is not and never will be the policeman of the Great Lakes region. If Rwanda wants to prove its credibility as an actor for peace, it should start by honouring its commitments to the Luanda process. After 34 days, we are still waiting for Rwandan experts to take up their duties, and they are arriving only after the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the mediator have insisted that they do so.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo remains firmly committed to the Luanda process in the belief that it represents the most promising path to a lasting resolution of the conflict. Throughout the process we have maintained a consistent and constructive position that respects the commitments that have been made and is committed to working for peace. The Council has a central role to play in ensuring that all parties fulfil their obligations and contribute to that common goal.

The Congolese people, in all their diversity, aspire to peace and stability. Those legitimate aspirations cannot be silenced by strategies of division and domination. My country is committed to protecting its citizens, preserving its territorial integrity and building a future in which the sovereignty of States is respected and not manipulated. We are not asking for favours. We demand that international law be respected, that the sovereignty of the Democratic Republic of the Congo be protected and that those responsible for acts that have been committed be held fully accountable.

**The President:** The representative of Rwanda has asked for the floor to make a further statement. I now give him the floor.

**Mr. Rwamucyo** (Rwanda): I want to state categorically that the Democratic Republic of the Congo has been mired in situations of conflict for decades. Its governance, politics and conflict and security challenges preceded its independence and have remained endemic post-independence. Rwanda is not responsible for that. The Kivus have historically been an endemic hotbed of conflict for reasons entirely internal to the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The leadership of the Democratic Republic of the Congo must take responsibility for addressing the root causes of the conflict, stop those responsible for the proliferation of weapons to armed groups — which use them to commit atrocities — and cease being a source of insecurity for its neighbours. The massacres that Ms. Kayikwamba Wagner mentioned, including those in Kishishe and other places, were committed because the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo has enabled the spread of weapons to many unruly armed groups in the region. It therefore has the responsibility to protect and guarantee the rights of all its citizens, including the Kinyarwanda-speaking Congolese, who have been ethnically cleansed and thousands of whom are rotting in refugee camps in the region.

I want to say that for the past 30 years the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo has been a source of insecurity for Rwanda. We have never been attacked from any of our other neighbours. Most of the attacks, artillery shelling, incursions and infiltration into Rwanda by the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR) over the past three decades have come from the Democratic Republic of the Congo and have resulted in loss of life and destruction of property. Why does the Democratic Republic of the Congo continue to preserve, support and maintain the FDLR and its splinter groups? If they could address that problem — to stop all the incursions in Rwanda — then there would be peace in our region. Now that Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo have signed the concept of operations providing a framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo to disengage and neutralize the FDLR, we hope that this can be effectively implemented. We should all work together to ensure that it works.

However, to just, in a few words, summarize the magnitude of the challenges of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the need for it to own its internal problems and address them in the most comprehensive way, I would like the Council to imagine a situation in which Rwanda, with its territory and its 14 million people, were lifted out of the Great Lakes region and relocated to a far-off place, such as near Papua New Guinea or Fiji, in the Pacific. Would the problems of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which have been endemic for decades, then disappear? I think they would get even worse. This, therefore, cannot be a Rwanda problem. The Democratic Republic of the Congo must take full ownership of its challenges and of its long-standing security, political and governance deficiencies and address them in consultation and in dialogue with its own citizens and all stakeholders in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Partners can help, and neighbours can support, but we cannot own those problems. This should not be a burden for Rwanda.

**The President:** 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 12.20 p.m.*