



GENEVA CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS
ADVANCEMENT AND GLOBAL DIALOGUE

UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

Adoption of UPR Outcomes

#HRC58 • 24 March 2025

Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)



STATE UNDER REVIEW

The delegation of the **DRC** thanks all those States which formulated recommendations with a view to improving the human rights situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It also expresses its gratitude to the Troika, Burundi, China and the Dominican Republic for the crucial role that they have played during this process.

Following the interactive dialogue, 284 recommendations were offered to the DRC. In order to follow up on these recommendations, the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Human Rights, a standing structure of the Government responsible for drafting all required reports pursuant to international and regional human rights treaties and the National Report on UPR, has taken the following actions. Firstly, the **establishment of an inter-institutional commission** of an ad-hoc nature to analyse the pertinence and scope of each of the recommendations received and the subject matter and before presenting a plan to the Government. Following the work of this commission, 235 recommendations were accepted and 49 noted and then a plan to implement those recommendations accepted was drafted. On the 49 recommendations noted, some had already been implemented during previous cycles. For others, the Government remains open for discussion.

Despite the goodwill clearly expressed by the Government to implement the recommendations accepted, the DRC's efforts are impeded by major obstacles, in particular the **military occupation** of some of our provinces by the Rwandan Army and its proxies, M23 and the AFC. These aggressors are committing international crimes and the most serious violations of international humanitarian law and are subjecting the civilian population to indescribable



suffering. Rwanda is actively supporting the rebel group M23, which is operating in the eastern part of the country, in particular in the provinces of North Kivu and South Kivu.

Rwanda is supplying weapons, intelligence and troops to M23 and the AFC, thus fuelling instability in the eastern part of the country. They are illegally exploiting mining resources. They are committing massacres, forced displacement and rape. This **Rwandan military occupation** constitutes an attack on the territorial integrity of the DRC. In order to combat impunity for these crimes, the DRC called for the convening of a special session of the UNHRC in February 2025. Following this session, a UNHRC resolution was adopted unanimously which orders the withdrawal of the troops of the Rwandan army from the Congolese territory and the cessation of the hostilities by M23 and the AFC.

Secondly, the **establishment of a UN Fact-Finding Mission and a Commission of Inquiry** into the human rights violations committed in the provinces of North Kivu and South Kivu. The DRC commits itself to fully collaborating with these two mechanisms and counts upon the support of all member and observer countries to obtain a cessation of the occupation of a part of the DRC's territory by Rwanda in application of this resolution. To conclude, the Government reiterates its commitment to doing all that is necessary to promote and protect human rights within its territory. The delegation of the DRC stands ready to continue this exchange and to take additional comments from Member States and other partners during this meeting.

NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS INSTITUTIONS

The **National Human Rights Institution of the DRC** welcomes the adoption of the report and recommendations formulated by Member States of the UNHRC following the DRC's review under the fourth cycle of the UPR. The adoption of this report comes at a difficult time when the situation in the eastern part of the DRC is deteriorating due to the invasion of the Rwandan Defence Forces and their proxies, M23 and AFC, leading to grave violations of human rights and major attacks on human rights, including summary executions, including of women and children, and also acts of sexual violence. The hospitals and humanitarian sites have been attacked, and these attacks have also been carried out against the judicial system and different state institutions and services. Prisons have been attacked and prisoners released. Camps for IDPs have been attacked as well with heavy weaponry and have been destroyed, which has led to dispersion of IDPs through the city. For many of them, their lives have been turned upside down. The advance of M23 and AFC, supported by Rwanda in South Kivu and also in North Kivu, has plunged this region into a security and humanitarian crisis, which is highly complex in nature. The NHRI has documented many cases of summary executions of young people, women and children. It continues to receive reports of cases of torture and for treatment.

UNHRC MEMBER AND OBSERVERS STATES

Ghana appreciates the DRC's constructive and active engagement in UN and other multilateral processes aimed at promoting peace and shared development. Ghana is pleased by the DRC's acceptance of our recommendations relating to the commitment to fully comply with the provisions of the Convention Against Torture, particularly in ensuring accountability for senior officials who may condone or permit acts of torture or ill-treatment by their subordinates. Ghana also welcomes the DRC's dedication to intensifying efforts aimed at restoring peace in areas



hosting refugees, where ongoing insecurity remains a pressing challenge. Ghana fully supports the adoption of the UPR report of the DRC and wishes the Government every success in implementing the accepted recommendations.

Gabon extends a warm welcome to the delegation of the DRC and congratulates them on the presentation of their outcome report. Gabon has taken note with satisfaction of the progress made by the DRC in the promotion and protection of human rights, and this despite the very challenging security context, particularly in the eastern part of the country. In terms of progress made, Gabon highlights the improvements to the legislative and institutional framework put in place to ramp up efforts to promote and protect the rights of women and to tackle human trafficking. Gabon also very much welcomes the creation of a national fund for reparation for victims of sexual violence linked to the conflict in the DRC, as well as the adoption of legislation on the protection of persons with disabilities. It encourages the DRC to stick to its current course of action and recommend that the UNHRC adopt the report.

Guinea extends a fraternal welcome to the Congolese delegation and thanks them for the presentation of their report. It very much appreciates and commends progress made in the DRC in the fields of holding and promoting civil and political rights, particularly the efforts to tackle gender-based violence. Guinea encourages the DRC to continue to implement accepted recommendations, in particular those pertaining to human rights defenders and to tackling impunity. It recommends the adoption of the report by the UNHRC and supports future efforts to strengthen human rights in the DRC.

India warmly welcomes the delegation of the DRC for the adoption of the report of the UPR Working Group on its fourth cycle of the UPR, which saw substantive participation with 98 delegations taking the floor and making a total of 285 recommendations. India appreciates the constructive engagement of the delegation of the DRC during the entire review, which reflects their commitment to the UPR process. India appreciates that as many as 235 recommendations have been accepted by the DRC, including three recommendations made by India. While recommending the adoption of their UPR report, India congratulates the delegation of the DRC on a successful review, and wishes them success in their efforts for implementing the accepted recommendations.

Indonesia commends the constructive engagement of the delegation of the DRC in the UPR process. Indonesia appreciates that all of the three recommendations it offered enjoy the support from the DRC, which are related to effective access to justice for victims of conflict-related sexual violence and other crimes, full exercise of the freedom of the press and the right to information in line with the obligations under ICCPR, and access to education for all children, especially in the conflict-affected areas in the eastern region. Indonesia takes note of the DRC's efforts to provide security and stability amidst the ongoing challenges posed by the conflict. It therefore believes that the implementation of these recommendations can meaningfully improve the human rights situation in the country. It is important to emphasise that the protection and fulfilment of human rights must also go hand in hand with the implementation of international humanitarian law and broader peace-building efforts. To conclude, Indonesia reiterates its continued commitment to support the improvement of human rights in the DRC and recommends that the outcome of its UPR be adopted by consensus.



The **Lao PDR** congratulates the DRC for its very successful UPR process and its very active participation in the related dialogue process. It congratulates the DRC for the actions taken to promote and protect human rights in the country, in particular its efforts to support and protect vulnerable groups. This has taken the guise into alia of amendments to their legislation. It also commends the DRC for the efforts that they have spearheaded to promote gender equality and to improve the healthcare and education systems into alia. The Lao PRD welcomes the fact that the DRC has accepted the majority of the recommendations that it received during the constructive dialogue, including both of the recommendations addressed to it by the Laos PDR. It wishes the DRC a successful implementation of the accepted recommendations. By way of conclusion, it urges the UNHRC to adopt the outcome document by consensus.

Madagascar warmly congratulates the DRC for having accepted one of the two recommendations offered by Madagascar on the ratification of the UNESCO Convention on Tackling Discrimination in the Field of Education. Given that the DRC has accepted 235 recommendations, the Government of Madagascar, which is the memory success and implementation of said recommendations, which will redound to the benefit of the Congolese people, who are the principal beneficiary of measures undertaken by their Government to promote and protect human rights.

Malawi commends the DRC for taking significant steps in promotion and protection of human rights. It urges the DRC to make all efforts in ensuring effective implementation of the accepted recommendations in line with ongoing priorities. It wishes the DRC all the best at this review and recommend the adoption of this report.

The **Maldives** appreciates their commitment to the UPR process and commends the Government of the DRC for accepting most of the recommendations received during the UPR process, including the two recommendations made by the Maldives. The latter wishes the Government of the DRC every success in the implementation of the accepted recommendations and request the council to adopt the UPR report by consensus.

Mauritania appreciates the DRC's cooperation with the UPR mechanism and commends the DRC's determination to promote and protect human rights via inter alia legislative, institutional and legal reforms intended to promote human rights and fundamental freedoms. Mauritania also commends the DRC for actions undertaken to align domestic legislation efforts with international standards and UN standards. It congratulates the DRC for the acceptance of the recommendations, wish them every success in implementation thereof. It also congratulates the DRC for all the efforts they have undertaken to timely submit their reports due under the treaty body system. Mauritania encourages the DRC to pursue their actions to eradicate discrimination against women and to protect all children free of discrimination so that they can all enjoy their rights in a favourable and pro rights environment. It exhorts the UNHRC to adopt the DCR's outcome report by consensus.

Morocco congratulates the DRC for their commitment and engagement of the fourth cycle of the UPR. It welcomes the involvement of the DCRC authorities and their determination to translate the recommendations made by my delegation to wait calling upon them to establish a national preventive mechanism for torture as well as to ensure universal health care coverage as well as recommending that they adopt a national strategy to promote women's participation in political



life and to enact and follow up on sin. Morocco congratulates the DRC for all the efforts it has undertaken to promote and protect human rights in its public policy. Morocco voices its support for the outcome document for the DRC as the combination of the UPR process. Morocco wishes every success in the implementation of the accepted recommendations.

Mozambique welcomes its distinguished delegation of the DRC for the adoption of their fourth cycle of UPR reports and thanks the DRC for their continued commitment to the UPR process. Mozambique takes note of the acceptance by the DRC of the 235 out of the 284 recommendations received during the review, including three recommendations made by Mozambique. Mozambique fully supports the adoption by consensus of the report and wishes the DRC every success in the implementation of the accepted recommendations.

Nepal welcomes the delegation of the DRC to the adoption of the UPR outcome and thanks them for their constructive engagement with human rights mechanisms. It appreciates the DRC for accepting two of three recommendations that Nepal offered. Nepal welcomes the DRC's commitment to transitional justice through a victim-centric approach. Nepal wishes the DRC all success in implementing the accepted recommendations and support the adoption of the UPR outcome report.

The **Philippines** commends the DRC for its constructive participation in the UPR process and its commitment to advance human rights. The Philippines thanks the DRC for accepting four recommendations from the Philippines, including the continued cooperation with the United Nations human rights mechanisms, human rights education, training and capacity-building to enforce effectively all laws and a plan of action to prevent and prosecute cases of sexual and gender-based violence, especially in conflict zones, and enhance efforts to stop the recruitment and use of children by armed group. In conclusion, the Philippines endorses the adoption of the UPR outcome report on the DRC and extends its best wishes for the successful implementation of the accepted recommendations.

Russia notes with satisfaction the review of the DRC during the fourth UPR cycle and thanks the DRC's delegation for the written information provided on the recommendations made. Russia notes that the overwhelming majority of the recommendations have been accepted, including those from Russia. It considers the situation regarding human rights in the DRC to require additional attention from the state, including to increase the level of trust of the population in the national judicial system and in law and order bodies. Regrettably, Russia notes that there is a substantial impact on the situation from the ongoing conflict in the eastern part of the country. Russia hopes that the recommendations accepted by the Congolese authorities during the UPR will be properly implemented and will allow many of the shortcomings regarding human rights to be addressed and remedied in the country. The Russian Federation recommends adoption of the report of the DRC in the fourth cycle of the UPR.

Saudi Arabia thanks the delegation of the DRC for her opening statement which shed light on her Government's stance with regard to the recommendations addressed to them. On the DRC's position with regard to the outcome report and the conclusions and recommendations, Saudi Arabia believes this report bears testimony to the DRC's cooperation with the various UN mechanisms, which is welcome. During the DRC's UPR, Saudi Arabia actively participated in the process and took that opportunity to highlight the country's cooperation with the UPR as a tool



and mechanism. Saudi Arabia calls upon the DRC to continue its ongoing efforts to promote and protect human rights in all areas. By way of conclusion, Saudi Arabia wishes the DRC every success in implementation of the recommendations and wish it every prosperity for the future. Saudi Arabia calls upon the UNHRC to adopt the report by consensus.

Senegal notes with satisfaction the progress made by the Government of the DRC in the implementation of its commitment to the promotion and the protection of human rights, in particular, the steps taken to bolster its legal and institutional framework. It also takes this opportunity by the same token to congratulate the DRC on the adoption of the law of 26 December 2022, establishing the fundamental principles for the protection and compensation of victims of sexual violence. By way of conclusion, whilst calling for the adoption of the related report, Senegal takes this opportunity to reiterate its warm wishes for every success in the implementation of the accepted recommendations to the DRC.

OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

The **World Council of Churches (WCC)** expresses deep concern that since the UPR took place, the human rights situation in the DRC has deteriorated further. In January, the Rwandan-backed M23 group attacked and captured the city of Goma, which has a population of over a million people. They have forcibly recruited children from schools and neighbourhoods, carried out acts of forced labour, attacked displaced persons camps and abducted wounded from hospitals. Over 8,500 people have been killed and they advanced into Bukavu in February and over 1,000 have now been killed. Also last month, Kodeka Militia, one of many groups fighting over land and resources in East Congo, attacked the Djaba group of villages, leaving more than 50 people dead, displacing many others and forcibly recruiting children. The Allied Democratic Forces, an armed group from Uganda, are targeting Christians in North Kivu and elsewhere, attacking Christian infrastructure such as churches, schools, hospitals, houses belonging to Christians and forcing kidnapped people to convert to Islam. This is an escalation of a pre-existing pattern of violent attacks. One of our partners reported that since 2021, in his village in Irumo territory, 28 churches, 16 health centres and 38 schools have been destroyed, 3,500 people killed and more than 15,000 displaced. The repetition and escalation of these attacks is causing massive displacement of the population. The WCC calls upon the M23 group to immediately cease hostilities, withdraw from all areas that it controls in accordance with UN Security Council resolution 2773 of last month. It calls on the Rwanda defence forces to stop supporting the armed group and immediately withdraw from Congolese territory without preconditions. The WCC calls upon the Government of the DRC to implement all UPR recommendations, particularly those calling for the protection of civilians in conflict-affected areas and to the government of Rwanda and others in the region to work to put an end to these atrocities, to allow for humanitarian access to those in affected areas and to work towards a peaceful resolution of conflict throughout DRC.

Taking the floor on behalf of the International Youth Alliance for Family Planning, DRC and the Sexual Rights Initiative, **Action Canada for Population and Development** welcomes the recommendations made to the Democratic Republic of Congo concerning the effective application of the Protocol of the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa and the compliance of national legislation with the Maputo Protocol, which authorises abortion in certain cases. Since the publication of the Maputo Protocol in the official journal, the DRC has taken certain measures to facilitate its application. However, legal obstacles



remain preventing its full implementation and contributing to dangerous practises that endanger women's lives and health and exacerbate social and economic inequalities. These obstacles include the failure to harmonise certain provisions of internal Congolese laws with those of the Maputo Protocol, such as firstly the Criminal Code, which prohibits access to abortion services in all contexts. Second, the Congolese Public Health Law of 2018, which makes no reference to access to abortion services. And finally, third, the Congolese Code of Medical Ethics, which only permits access to abortion services for therapeutic reasons. Action Canada calls on the international community to support the DRC's efforts to build institutional capacity, raise community awareness, and ensure access to affordable and quality reproductive health services. These measures will help to reduce maternal mortality, promote gender equality, and respect women's rights. Action Canada reiterates its calls to the government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to fully implement the Maputo Protocol throughout the DRC, and secondly, to bring national legislation on access to safe abortion services in line with the Maputo Protocol.

Istituto Internazionale Maria Ausiliatrice (IMA), speaking on behalf of a group of NGOs, welcomes the DRC's constructive participation in the fourth UPR. IMA is fully aware of the fragility of the situation in the country following the exacerbation of the armed conflict, and remains firmly persuaded that the implementation of the UPR recommendations is all the more pressing in such circumstances. In particular, IMA welcomes the acceptance of recommendations intended to guarantee the safety and security of school infrastructure, free education, and high-quality education for all, as well as developing human rights education curriculums to strengthen social cohesion. IMA encourages the DRC to prioritise the implementation of these recommendations in rural areas with a particular focus on teacher training, whilst at the same time taking all steps to guarantee educational services in conflict zones. War has a devastating impact on children and on their rights, which is then heaped upon pre-existing violations. IMA urges the DRC to ramp up its efforts to put an end to child labour in mines. In conflict areas, women are all the more exposed to the risk of sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, forced marriage, and early pregnancy. Education is a vital tool for tackling and eradicating gender-based violence. IMA regrets the fact that the DRC has only taken note of the recommendation concerning the creation of a legal framework to tackle domestic violence and marital rape.

Caritas International jointly with the members of the National Coalition of Civil Society Organisations for the UPR of the DRC, an umbrella organisation bringing together more than 150 organisations, welcome the adoption of the UPR report for the DRC. This session is taking place against the backdrop of the eastern part of the DRC being wracked by a serious humanitarian and security crisis, which is giving rise to multiple human rights violations. Given the circumstances, it is vital that member states monitor the effective implementation of the recommendations of the fourth UPR cycle and do so through a lens of respecting human rights, as well as to promote and bolster peace building and strengthening the rule of law. It is essential that the national authorities translate these recommendations from words into concrete actions and do so in close cooperation with civil society. Civil society's participation in such actions remains decisive, despite the major challenges with which they are confronted. Insecurity, lack of safety and mass movement of populations, as well as restrictions on civic space are severely hamstringing our organisations in their operations and in delivering their mandates. Recent budgetary restrictions are having a serious impact on the humanitarian response. Whilst hailing the DRC for its efforts to promote and protect human rights, despite the challenging circumstances, Caritas



nonetheless recommends the Government adopt an inclusive strategy for follow-up and monitoring of the fourth cycle of the UPR, which involves the likely and meaningful participation of civil society and relevant institutions, including representatives of decentralised bodies; strengthen investment in the prevention of violations and do so by structural reforms; take steps to guarantee the protection of vulnerable groups, including indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities, IDPs and the victims of serious human rights violations; and protect human rights defenders. Thank you very much. Thank you, Mr. President.

ACAT, FIACAT, Ensemble Contre la Peine de Mort, and the members of the Global Coalition Against the Death Penalty, welcome the commitments undertaken by the DRC authorities during this review, particularly the adoption of a national preventive mechanism on torture and steps taken to reduce prison overcrowding by having recourse to alternative, to deprivation of liberty for juvenile offenders. They do nonetheless regret the position of the authorities with regard to recommendations pertaining to restoring the moratorium on executions. One year after the moratorium was lifted, FIACAT and its co-signatory organisations have seen a worrying increase in death penalty on death sentences, particularly joint death sentences handed down against military groups, militant groups in the east of the country and alleged perpetrators of urban banditry. At least 480 people were convicted to a death penalty in 2004. This is a 300% increase of such sentences since the moratorium was lifted and an increase of nearly 2,000 sentences since 2020. They call upon the DRC's authorities to not cede to the current military situation to avoid from living up to their responsibilities because otherwise the moratorium on executions which dates back to 2003 will be in further peril. They also call for the restoration of said moratorium and the commutation of all death penalties only under article 16 of the DRC constitution which provides for the right to life of all.

CIVICUS appreciates the Government of DRC's engagement with the UPR and the adoption of the law on the protection of human rights defenders (HRDs). Although an important step in the protection of human rights, the law contains shortfalls which could increase the risk to HRDs and facilitate their criminalisation. Since its last review, the DRC has only partially implemented eight out of 28 recommendations relating to civic space. CIVICUS remains concerned on the continued arbitrary arrests, intimidation, and judicial harassment of HRDs and journalists. Furthermore, due to the civic space violations committed in the context of the escalating conflict in the eastern DRC, the country was placed on the civicus monitor watch list indicating a rapidly declining environment for civil society, HRDs and journalists since the capture of Goma by the armed group M23 in January. While HRDs, journalists, and civil society have been targeted with threats, attacks, detention, abductions, and even killings in areas controlled by M23, access to information and freedom of expression have been hampered by internet cuts, restrictions on social media, and authorities' threats on sanctions against journalists who cover the conflict. For example, in January, the President of the Council for Audiovisual and Communication threatened French broadcasters France 24, RFI, and TV5 Monde with sanctions for reporting on alleged advances by M23, which he described as apology for terrorism. A few days later, Al Jazeera was suspended for a period of 90 days for destabilising institutions of the Republic. CIVICUS urges the Government to uphold its human rights obligations by creating an enabling environment for civil society and HRDs, as well as prioritise actions to fight against the widespread impunity of violations committed against HRDs, civil society, and journalists.



Interfaith International welcomes the report of the UPR Working Group on the DRC. During the interactive dialogue on the DRC, 98 delegations made statements and 285 recommendations were made by those states. Interfaith International shares concerns about the lifting of the moratorium on the death penalty, the extensive gender-based violence, torture, extrajudicial killings, as well as the reduction of the civic space. The situation of imprisoned persons and acts of reprisals against human rights defenders and journalists are also of deep concern. The DRC should also consider stakeholders' submissions raising concerns about equality, rights to life, liberty, security of persons, freedom from torture, and administration of justice, including impunity and the rule of law. Fundamental freedoms and the right to participate in public and political life are also respected. Social and cultural rights of the people are the state's responsibility. Interfaith International hopes that the DRC will implement the maximum number of recommendations made by the states and the stakeholders. The DRC authorities continue to attribute the ongoing human rights crisis in the eastern region to armed conflict backed by Rwandan forces. Women and children are the main victims, with over two million internally displaced people living in subhuman conditions. Children are the main victims of schools in the area who were targeted by the Rwandan army. Interfaith International calls on Rwanda to cease supporting armed militias and respect the DRC's sovereignty.

FACTS & FIGURES ON UPR OUTCOMES

284 Recommendations Received

235 Recommendations Supported

49 Recommendations Noted

FACTS & FIGURES ON PARTICIPATION

17 State Delegations

1 National Human Rights Institution

7 Non-Governmental Organizations