



GENEVA CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS
ADVANCEMENT AND GLOBAL DIALOGUE

UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

Enhanced Interactive Dialogue on the High Commissioner's Oral Update with the
Participation of the Team of International Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo

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OPENING STATEMENT

Ms. Nada AL-NASHIF, United Nations Deputy High Commissioner (HC) for Human Rights

The offensive launched this year by the Rwandan-backed M23 armed group in the North and South Kivu provinces has exacerbated an already dire human rights and humanitarian crisis in eastern DRC. Since the last update to this Council in October and despite this latest wave of violence, the UN Joint Human Rights Office has endeavoured to provide technical support to the authorities to strengthen the rule of law, to advance on transitional justice and to enhance the fight against impunity. The **scale of violence and insecurity** have hampered the ability of OHCHR to fully discharge this mandate. Nevertheless, with OHCHR's assistance, trials were held that resulted in the **conviction of a warlord** and former militiamen for war crimes and crimes against humanity for murder, torture, rape and sexual slavery.

The Deputy HC underlines with grave concern that since the beginning of the year, the United Nations has documented **602 victims of extrajudicial and summary executions** committed by all parties to the conflict in North and South Kivu provinces alone. In Ituri province in the



northeast, several groups continue to **kill, maim and abduct civilians**. Meanwhile, DRC forces and their allies have also attacked civilians. Conflict-related sexual violence continues to run rampant and is being committed by all parties. Cases increased by more than 270% from January to February.

Civic space has been violently stamped out in the areas occupied by the Rwandan backed M23 and any dissent is brutally silenced. Close to **26 million people**, nearly a quarter of the DRC's population, are experiencing emergency and crisis levels of food insecurity. In total, nearly 7.8 million people are displaced in the DRC, including 3.8 million in the Kivu provinces alone. Thousands of schools have been closed, destroyed, turned into emergency shelters or occupied by armed groups, and more than 1.6 million children in east DRC are no longer in education.

Any plans for a sustainable peace must **tackle the root causes of the conflict**, including the illegal exploitation of the national wealth that lies in natural resources. The DRC authorities must also take a firm and consistent stand against corruption, impunity and hate speech by whomever committed. **Transitional justice** processes need acceleration, including towards the finalisation of inclusive national consultations. The DRC's national policy on transitional justice, developed with the support of OHCHR, carries the potential for meaningful future truth and reconciliation efforts. OHCHR encourages the DRC authorities to take the necessary action to adopt the policy and subsequently the law on transitional justice. OHCHR will continue to support this work wherever possible. This involves the provision of forensic expertise, logistical and financial resources and support to victims and witnesses. OHCHR is also committed to supporting the reform of the penal code to integrate provisions that make hate speech a full-fledged offence.

After almost **three decades of war and over six million deaths**, it should be abundantly clear that there is no military solution to this conflict. The people of the DRC need local, national and regional actors to demonstrate leadership and prioritise dialogue over self-interest, over greed and over violence. The international community must also take decisive, concrete and urgent action to facilitate a durable peace in the DRC. States and private companies that **profit from natural resources** exploited under dangerous and illegal conditions must stop hiding behind complex and shadowy supply chains. States with influence must act.

OHCHR reiterates the calls by the UN Security Council, the UNHRC and the UNSG on Rwanda to withdraw its forces from the DRC. Without concrete action, this current violence may well engulf the entire region and the risks of such catastrophe are growing by the day. OHCHR remains committed under its mandate to providing support to the DRC authorities, victims and human rights defenders (HRDs), including those who have been specifically targeted for their human rights work, subject to conditions on the ground allowing for more effective engagement.

In the meantime, OHCHR continues to monitor and document violations and abuses, irrespective of the parties alleged to have committed them. There must be **accountability for the extreme scale of suffering** of civilians in the DRC. As recently mandated by this office, by this council, apologies, our office has also moved quickly to set up a fact-finding mission on violations of international law committed by all parties in the Kivu provinces. OHCHR will provide an oral update in June. It is time for the international community to send a strong and unequivocal message to all parties that the violations and abuses, many **potentially amounting to**



international crimes, must cease and be effectively addressed. Only then can we lay the foundations for the sustainable peace and development which the people of the DRC have awaited for so long.

STATEMENTS BY PANELLISTS

Ms. Bintou KEITA, Head of MONUSCO

Taking the floor with a sense of urgency, the Head of MONUSCO explains that since she last addressed the UNHRC on 7 February, the situation has not stabilised, but rather worsened. The **conflict is spiralling**, violence is spreading and civilian suffering is on the increase. Praising the OHCHR's essential work to keep the world's focus on the DRC, she explains that OHCHR strengthens advocacy to seek improvement in human rights within the country and reminds the international community that the crisis is not isolated and that it must not be allowed to spread towards the whole of the Great Lakes region.

The Head of MONUSCO commends the ongoing commitment of the Team of Experts which recently visited the DRC under its mandate to promote justice and combat impunity. She also emphasises the initial work done by the Team to set up the UNHRC-mandated **Fact-Finding Mission (FFM)**, calling on all parties to provide support and cooperation. The Head of MONUSCO further notes with interest the DRC authorities' intention to urgently finalise a framework for transitional justice, as announced on 28 March, seeing it as a step in the right direction.

While efforts continue in Geneva, in Kinshasa and elsewhere, the population in the east of the country is suffering from the ongoing conflict. The M23 movement, supported by Rwanda, the ongoing offensives carried out by the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) and those of CODECO and various factions of the Wazalendo are continuing. As a result, hundreds of thousands of children, women, older persons and internally displaced persons (IDPs) are suffering. Of the **1,099 human rights violations recorded** by the UN Joint Human Rights Office since the start of the year, 88% took place in the provinces suffering conflict and 71% were committed by armed groups.

The Head of MONUSCO is particularly concerned about **prison break** in Goma, Bukavu and other localities on 25 January in the context of M23's territorial expansion. Several dangerous criminals, including those convicted for international crimes, are now at large. The UN Joint Human Rights Office has noted an increase in **crimes related to sexual violence** and reprisal attacks by M23 against victims, survivors of conflict-related sexual violence, witnesses, forensic doctors, human rights defenders and members of the judiciary in Goma and in Bukavu.

We must **heed the calls of victims and survivors** for the protection and an urgent restoration of order. Since January 2025 in North and South Kivu, at least 240 civilians have been summarily executed by M23 for their perceived collaboration with armed forces of the DRC, Wazalendo or the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR), sometimes simply for criticising the M23 and/or the Rwandan Defence Forces (RDF). Cases of threats against human rights defenders, civil society and judicial actors have doubled.

Many have fled to unknown destinations or relocated with the support of MONUSCO and partners. In North Kivu and Ituri, the ADF continue to kill, maim and adopt. The **ADF remains the**



deadliest armed group in the country. They have killed 909 people since January. This is more than three persons per day. They are also responsible for the kidnapping of more than 160 people.

Alarming, children bear the brunt of the conflict. In February 2025 alone, the number of grave **violations of children's rights** by armed groups rose by 137%. The joint UN Human Rights Office recorded a staggering 270% increase in the number of victims of conflict-related sexual violence. The Head of MONUSCO is particularly concerned by **reports of rape** perpetrated by FRDC soldiers and Wazalendo while retreating from the battlefield in South Kivu. In M23/RDF-controlled areas such as such crimes are under-reported due to lack of access and fear of reprisals against victims and witnesses. Taking note of the sentencing of 51 FRDC soldiers and three Wazalendo members by the military judicial authorities in relation to these violations. But more than justice is needed after the facts.

The Head of MONUSCO calls for more **robust prevention mechanisms** by the Government of the DRC. The UNHRC needs to remind all those directly responsible for or actively supporting the prolonged suffering of civilians that they will be held accountable before domestic, regional and international judicial institutions. The **humanitarian situation** in eastern DRC remains critical as ongoing advances by M23 supported by the Rwandan Defence Forces (RDF) continue to provoke significant new displacement. Many displaced families are forced to return home too soon, often without adequate security conditions, without basic services or without any support. The continued closure of Goma and Kavumu airports is a **major obstacle to the delivery of aid**.

MONUSCO is also gravely concerned by the recent announcement by **Thomas Lubanga, sentenced by the ICC**, of the creation of an armed coalition based in a neighbouring country. This aggravates the inter-ethnic tensions in a troubled area and brings a risk of repetition of international crimes. While the conflict continues, there is a worrying loss of decades of investment and efforts to uphold the rule of law in the east of the DRC. This is regrettable and we cannot allow it. We owe present and future generations in the DRC a fair, open, peaceful society where **the law provides protection**, life has a price and dignity is not a luxury but a right. The people of the DRC are waiting for the for the law to resume its rightful place and for protection to become a reality. There is still time to act.

H.E. Ms. Chantal CHAMBU MWAVIDA, Minister for Human Rights of the Democratic Republic of the Congo

The Minister opens her statement by stressing that the UNHRC is a UN body in charge of guaranteeing dignity and the right to very human rights without distinction. The UNHRC is at a pivotal moment of its history. It is facing huge tragedies worldwide, in particular in the territories of the DRC which is occupied by the Rwandan army and its proxies from the M23 and the *Alliance Fleuve Congo* (AFC).

The Rwandan army and the proxies from the M23 and the AFC are committing therein **in fully impunity international crimes** and serious human rights violations which include killings of thousands of civilians, sexual violence, including sexual violence against children, enlisting and conscription of children, summary executions, pillaging and confiscation of civilian property, forced labour, the hindering of humanitarian aid, attacks against MONUSCO's staff and property and humanitarian organisations' staff and property, indiscriminate bombing in particular of major



towns such as Goma and Kivu, systematic dismissal of public officials and their unlawful replacement by the Rwandan army forces and their M23 proxies and the AFC proxies; the forced displacement of civilians as well as the systematic persecution of opinion formers, customary leaders, human rights defenders, forcing them all to flee and to seek protection under the Ministry for Human Rights.

This unacceptable situation forced the Ministry for Human Rights to request, following the request by President of the Republic and the Prime Minister, the holding of the 37th Special Session of the UNHRC, during which the Council adopted its resolution A/HRC/S/37/L.1 this on 7 February 2025 which **condemns Rwanda for its military occupation** of some of the DRC's territory as well as the plundering of our natural resources and the serious human rights. Notwithstanding this resolution, the situation on the ground remains a cause for serious concern.

Since January 2025, the attacks launched by the Rwandan army and the M23 proxies and the AFC in the North Kivu have killed more than 7,000 led to the destruction of 90 refugee centres and forced more 27 million people to need a humanitarian assistance. Against this dark backdrop, several hundreds of civilians were killed or reported missing in South Kivu. On a daily basis people witness **torture, bodily harm and public beatings**. Furthermore, in the eastern DRC, civilians face anguish and fear on a daily basis.

Therefore, the **UNHRC-mandated FFM** absolutely needs to be supported expeditiously as it seeks to establish what has happened in North Kivu and South Kivu. The FFM must become truly operational and effective to provide proper relief for the Congolese public which has been deeply affected, but remains resilient. The DRC welcomes the appeal for contributions launched online by the FFM and is ready to cooperate with the FFM. The Ministry for Human Rights is disseminating information about this mission to the public. It is encouraging victims to fill in the reporting form put online by the FFM. It has translated it into Swahili, the local language, both the form as well as the FFM's appeal for contribution. The Ministry is encouraging people to report abuse. Furthermore, combating crimes against humanity perpetrated by the Rwandan authorities and the Rwandan army was the subject of several communications between the DRC's authorities and the Teams of Experts.

The DRC has international obligations. Now pursuant to these, the DRC is therefore endeavouring to cover the whole of its country. The DRC has draft texts on the creation of transitional justice mechanism texts to counter impunity. Also supported by other ministries and public institutions, the Ministry for Human Rights has started to provide care and support to human rights defenders who have been fleeing persecution in North Kivu and South Kivu. Furthermore, the Ministry for Human Rights has been issuing legal texts or draft legal texts in order to facilitate the identification of and the treatment provided for victims as well as data gathering on the promotion protection of human rights. Thus, the Ministry regularly presents periodic reports or other exceptional reports to international human rights bodies such as the CEDAW Committee.

The Government, notably through the Ministry for Human Rights, is continuing to **implement many of the recommendations addressed by the UNHRC**, other UN human rights bodies, other bodies from the African Union. Therefore, in this vein, upon the instruction of the Prime Minister, Head of Government, a plan to implement the recommendations stemming from the fourth UPR



cycle of the DRC has been put together under the leadership of the Human Rights Ministry and it will soon be submitted to stakeholders for approval. In this context, the recent recommendations made by the CEDAW Committee are being considered.

Despite all these efforts, times are hard and international solidarity is needed more than ever to force Rwanda to **withdraw its troops from the DRC's territory**, to put an end to war, to provide justice for the millions of innocent victims and to allow the DRC to fulfil its international human rights obligations without hindrance. In this respect, the Minister extends her gratitude to the UNHRC, the international organisations and countries which have adopted brave, bold decisions for the DRC, including sanctions designed to act as a deterrent against Rwanda and to provide humanitarian aid to the citizens of the DRC, encouraging everyone else to follow suit.

Ms. Julienne LUSENGE, President of Female Solidarity for Integrated Peace and Development

'When life is denied to you, when water is denied to you, when you are denied food, what do you have left? You wake up in the morning, **you do not know if you'll still be alive at night**, when you go to sleep at night you don't know if you'll wake up alive in the morning. What else can we add? What else can we say about human rights in my country? What are we being able to pass on to our children?'

The situation the eastern DRC is experiencing is indescribable. For several years, the DRC has fought to promote human rights and today the Congolese have been brought back to scratch from the right back to the beginning because of force, because of the actions of those people who feel they have the right of life and death over everyone else. Everything that has been said about what is happening in the DRC is true. People are being killed at all times, the displaced are caused to flee at every moment. In Goma, Ms. Julienne LUSENGE met a five-year-old girl who has been fleeing for eight years. She had to leave her school when she was five.

Speaking to the UNHRC from her heart, Ms. Julienne LUSENGE expresses for everything that has been done for the DRC. But much further is needed. Rwanda must be asked to go home. The **Congolese are paying a huge price** for the Rwandan genocide. They grew up with the Tutsis, they lived with the Tutsis, they have never had any problems and to date there still are no problems between their peoples. Instead, the problem is with the regimes. The peoples want peace in the Great Lakes regions. Ms. Julienne LUSENGE and other female mediators want to work on peace and mediation. People need to sit down and talk.

Ms. Julienne LUSENGE painstakingly depicts her vision. 'We do not need to turn to weapons to claim power or land and we can never, never protect a tribe with arms. **You protect through dialogue and cohesion**. That's how you protect tribes. You don't need to drive people out of their villages and replace them by others. We can live together. We cannot afford to cause others to flee and replace them. Impunity has lasted for years and years now in the Great Lakes regions. Because of this impunity, we are now in this situation. All these warlords who have waged war in the east and who have found refuge in Rwanda have never been brought to justice. Yet Congo had arrested an FDLR member and took him back to Rwanda. Why isn't legal mutual assistance happening in the Great Lakes region? Why? It is more than high time that we, or rather that Rwanda understand that this violence will not bring about a positive future for Rwanda. The latter



has **destroyed cohesion, the social fabric that existed between us** and which still exists between us, which we can repair. We can remedy this situation. The Congolese should be better organised to be better heard. No one can come and kill us on our territory just because we are allegedly not organised. We will manage our internal affairs but let us do so. Let us organise ourselves domestically so that we can meet the SDGs.'

Women are traumatised with everything that has happened, with all the deaths, their children killed, obliged to flee. Ms. Julienne LUSENGE asks what are they going to pass on to the next generations? Banks have been closed, they are still up closed today. When sending \$10 to a member of their families back home, they don't get it because the exchange rate is 25,000 francs and \$10 becomes 20,000 francs. People don't get their money when they transfer it. This should not be happening.

The UN was created to enable people to work together while respecting rights. The people have invested, have built a lot to promote and defend human rights and **no one has the right to trample underfoot these rules** today. Once again, she appeals to the Council's solidarity to support the Congolese people which have wrongfully been harmed.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

With regard to solutions, **Ms. Julienne LUSENGE**, mentions justice in the DRC, but also in the Great Lakes region, and international cooperation. Effective participation of women at all levels in the dialogue is much needed to allow peace to return. **Women must be at the table**. When women are the table, they talk about the humanitarian situation, not about politics. The Addis Ababa Framework Agreement needs to be implemented in all processes because it is only that agreement that has been signed by all Heads of State. Only that framework sets out the path for peace. Effective humanitarian assistance is also much needed, and it must be available to the public, which is already very vulnerable. **Psychological support for Congolese women** is also crucial because the whole people, as well as the children, are traumatised because of the horrors have seen, those deadly body count. Women in Goma told her that the problem is Rwanda and the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR). As whatever the DRC has done to send back the FDLR to Rwanda has been unfruitful, they said Rwanda must open the door and take back the FDLR for dialogue. In closing, she explains there are 449 or 450 tribes in the area. The international community can't just protect one and leave the others 449 unprotected. She calls upon all states work effectively for peace in the DRC and in the Great Lakes. The DRC is not just precious metals, but also water and forests and lakes. Human rights must be a reality, not just on paper not just in resolutions. The Congolese need to experience human rights and that means being able to go out for a walk for water you need without any fear of being killed.

H.E. Ms. Chantal CHAMBU MWAVITA emphasizes once again the close cooperation existing between the DRC and the mechanisms to protect human rights. She seizes the opportunity to reiterate the appeal of the President of the DRC on the international recognition of the genocide perpetrated by Rwanda in the DRC and calls for measures by the international community such as the creation of humanitarian corridors; the provision of significant support to the FFM, especially financial support; the adoption of sanctions directed against Rwanda; support for the efforts deployed by the DRC's Government to set up transitional justice mechanisms, notably a



special criminal court for the DRC; and finally, the recognition of the genocide perpetrated by Rwanda in the past and in the present in the DRC. There is no cooperation between the DRC and the FDLR. Very often Rwanda makes things up. It is needed to put an end to a pretext often used by Rwanda in order to attack the DRC, and this for over 30 years. On this particular matter, the DRC's Government has always been and will remain open to establish a regional mechanism to put an end to what the FDLR is doing. There are national self-defence forces to counter terrorism which the DRC had to create to combat the Rwandan offensives. Their purposes is to defend the DRC's territory. The region concerned was occupied for many years by Rwanda.

Ms. Bintou KEITA points out that several frameworks have established exactly what should happen for us to create stability in the east DRC. First, we must bring about an immediate and unconditional ceasefire. Second, a dialogue must be resumed in the regional initiatives, jointly the East African Community (EAC) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) with a speeding up of what is being done and discussed in the context of these joint summits. Third, the suffering of the population must be relieved. Humanitarian assistance needs to be financed. **2.5 billion dollars** is what is needed so far, but only 7.5% of that figure is available. To put it clearly, if people are suffering, more money is needed for them to be supported, but also the Goma Airport and Kawumu Airport need to be reopened to humanitarian relief operations. Lastly, she echoes Ms. Julienne LUSENGE on the importance of ensuring the **effective participation of women** throughout the processes.

Mr. Bessolé René BAGORO, member of the Team of International Experts on the DRC, underscores that the crisis in the east DRC is having an impact on the mandate and on transitional justice in general. From an operational point of view, first of all, the crisis creates insecurity that is hence preventing the Team of Experts from travelling and meeting with the person they need to meet in order to reflect more creatively about the process. Due to the ongoing crisis, the emergencies are constantly changing and needless to say, the first thing that needs to be done is to end the crisis so that normal life can resume. This means that the transitional justice process will not be supported as much in terms of money given and thoughts given to it. Hence, there is an impact. For instance, the Team of Experts has noted several times in the reports that the Provincial **Commission on Truth, Justice and Reconciliation** of the Central KASAI which began its work and which should have become a kind of model for the rest of the country if it was successful, had experienced financing difficulties. The Team of Experts flags that once again and with this new situation the Team's appeals are falling on deaf ears, but the Team does reiterate that appeal. The Team of Experts insists on the fact that if the death penalty was actually implemented peace, would be jeopardised in the region. The situation is already jeopardised because many people have been sentenced to death have not been executed yet. The Team of Experts hopes that will never happen because solutions need to be found for peace to return, and this will not happen through executions. Turning to **measures to replace MONUSCO**, the Team of Experts in their reports has explained several times that to replace MONUSCO, the DRC must not only restore its authority, namely fill the security void created, but also support the joint UN Joint Human Rights Office. However, once again, the Teams of Experts reiterates its appeal for the potential return of MONUSCO.

Ms. Nada AL-NASHIF explains it is critical to support the DRC in strengthening national justice systems to make sure to **end impunity**. Despite some progress, the relevant national institutions



need sustained support to uphold fair and independent judicial processes, more critical than ever now in line with international standards. OHCHR encourages the international community to continue supporting the peace process and use its leverage on the parties to the conflict to ensure a lasting ceasefire and an immediate halt to human rights violations and abuses. **Lasting peace requires meaningful participation.** Ms. Nada AL-NASHIF adds her voice on the call for the engagement and the participation of women, young people, Indigenous people and other disenfranchised groups.

OHCHR's ongoing **documentation of violations and abuses** is aimed at ensuring that independent, credible information actually lays the ground for national and international responses. By identifying patterns of violations, OHCHR contributes to accountability efforts and helps to prevent further abuses, thereby also contributing to early warning and fostering preventive actions. In this regard, the Deputy HC pays **tribute to human rights defenders**, those very brave women and men who continue stalwartly, tirelessly to defend human rights and promote peace and social cohesion. Their role is crucial. It is up to the international community to work to guarantee adequate protection and security for them all.

OHCHR invites the international community to **cooperate with the FFM**, especially by providing it with relevant information and analysis and using its influence and others on the parties to the conflict to ensure full cooperation, including by facilitating access to sites and to victims and witnesses. International support to the implementation of the recommendations will be essential moving forward. With regard to the FFM, a start-up team is already in place to work on the staffing and the logistical elements necessary. The digital infrastructure for the collection and the preservation of information and evidence has been put in place and the initial phase of the investigations has already begun. A mission to **interview victims and witnesses** who fled the violence has taken place and another one will be deployed shortly. As a reminder, the High Commissioner will provide an oral update at the June 2025 session of the UNHRC with a written report at the September session.

In conclusion, the Deputy HC reiterates OHCHR had hoped that the different initiatives aimed at providing increased technical support and assistance to the DRC in the field of human rights to address past violations and guarantee non-recurrence would help avoid the current situation. OHCHR will maintain its efforts, but regrettably once again it witnesses the suffering of thousands of people in eastern DRC, victims of **a conflict that continues to deprive, to displace and to dehumanise mass populations**. The Deputy HC urges to consolidate efforts of dialogue and of constructive engagement at national, regional and international levels to end this brutal conflict.

INTERACTIVE DIALOGUE

Views Expressed by State Delegations

Sweden jointly with the Nordic-Baltic countries remain deeply concerned about the escalation of the conflict in eastern DRC. The countries reiterate that the M23 must withdraw immediately from all areas under its control. Rwanda's military, whose presence in the DRC violates international law, must withdraw fully from the territory of the DRC. They also urge the DRC to cease its operation with the FDLR and other armed groups. They commend the ongoing regional initiatives for political dialogue and urge all parties to participate in these negotiations in good



faith. There can be no military solution to the conflict. The Nordic-Baltic are alarmed by reports of widespread violations and abuses of human rights and violations of IHL, including sexual and gender-based violence, the recruitment of child soldiers and extrajudicial executions. All parties must prioritise protection of civilians, ensure full, safe and unhindered humanitarian access and fully respect their obligations under IHL and international human rights law. Lastly, they are following the developments in the appeal trials of the murders of the UN experts Zaida Catalan and Michael Sharp in 2017. In closing, they stress the importance of accountability.

Italy is deeply concerned for the escalating conflict in provinces of the DRC, as well as for the deteriorating security and human rights situation following renewed assault by the Rwanda Defence Forces backed M23 group. Civilian population, especially women and children, must be protected amid the worsening humanitarian crisis and rising displacement. Italy strongly condemns the M23 offensive and the establishment of a parallel administration in the occupied territories, as well as the presence of the Rwandan Defence Forces (RDF) in the DRC, which represents a breach of territorial integrity. Italy is appealed by all violations of human rights and IHL, including sexual and gender-based violence, summary execution and the recruitment of children, and it reiterates its call to ensure accountability for all those responsible. This escalation of violence significantly undermines African-led peace efforts. Italy reaffirms its support for the Rwanda and Nairobi Peace Processes and urges all parties to pursue a negotiated resolution of the conflict. Finally, Italy deplores the DRC's decision to lift the moratorium on death penalty and the subsequent soaring in death sentences, which raises serious human rights concerns in the current volatile context.

Switzerland is deeply alarmed by the humanitarian situation in the DRC and particularly in the east. It condemns the offensive led by M23 and the ADF with the support of North and South Kivu. It also condemns the violations of IHL by all actors, in particular attacks against civilians, summary executions, recruitment of child soldiers as well as all forms of violence against civilians. Switzerland remains alarmed by the scale of sexual and gender-based violence. Around 900 reported rapes were committed in the east of the DRC during two weeks in February. This must end. Security conditions must be created so that airport in Goma can be reopened and so that humanitarian aid and staff can be taken there. Switzerland is worried about the attacks against human rights defenders and journalists who are victims of threats and arbitrary arrests and forced to flee their right to freedom of expression must be guaranteed. Switzerland enjoins all parties to the conflict to strictly respect human rights and to end hostilities.

With the international focus rightly being on eastern Congo, **Germany** draws the Human Rights Council's attention to the persistent human rights gaps persist across the country. Germany encourages the DRC's Government to continue its efforts to strengthen human rights in particular human rights of detainees to guarantee freedom of expression and to abolish the death penalty. As noted by the panellists, the human rights situation in the eastern Congo remains shocking. It is further deepened by the recent offensives of M23 backed by the Rwanda defence forces. Germany urges all parties in eastern DRC to respect human rights and ensure safe rapid and unfettered access of humanitarian aid. Germany renewedly welcomes the DRC's request for a Special Session of UNHRC that allowed the Council to set up a strong investigative mechanism into all allegations. This mechanism should work in close coordination with all other accountability mechanisms that exist.



Malawi commends the DRC for the cooperation with the Team of Experts and for all the efforts being taken to ensure peace and security in the country. Malawi join in expressing concern following the ongoing conflict and instability in the eastern part of the DRC. Malawi applauds the regional and international efforts through concerted actions aimed at restoring peace and security and ensuring the protection of civilians. It particularly notes the joint efforts of the SADC and the Eastern African Community (EAC). The implementation of the roadmap adopted by the SADC and the EAC is a critical way forward for the realisation of peace in the DRC. As a member of the SADC and the African Union, Malawi stands with the people of the DRC in the quest for peace, stability and sustainable development.

Japan welcomes the adoption by consensus of the resolution at the 37th Special Session of the UNHRC on 7 February 2025. This resolution represents a significant step towards addressing the human rights situation in the DRC and ensuring accountability to further promote and protect human rights. Japan remains deeply concerned about the deteriorating human rights situation in the eastern DRC, where women and children in particular are at increasing risk of being subjected to violence. All parties to the conflict must strictly fulfil their obligations under international law, including IHRL and IHL. There is no military solution to this conflict. Regional peace initiatives, remain of crucial importance in the effort to achieving a lasting peaceful solution to the conflict through African-led political processes. Implementation of the joint EAC-SADC Summit held on 8 February is key. Japan also acknowledged the Summit meeting between the DRC and Rwanda held 18 March in Qatar. Japan calls all parties to actively engage in accelerated political consultation. Japan will continue to support all efforts to prevent further escalation. Japan remains committed to working with the international community to advance human rights and peace and security in the DRC.

South Africa stresses that the technical assistance and capacity-building provided to the DRC is especially important given recent developments, which were the subject of the Council's Special Session. South Africa reiterates its call for the immediate cessation of hostilities and the implementation of recent commitments made in this regard, as well as the guarantee of access to humanitarian aid. All uninvited forces must withdraw, and all neighbouring countries must ensure that they are not providing support to armed groups. There can be no military solution to the conflict. A sustainable peace will only be achieved through inclusive dialogue and African-led solutions. Accordingly, South Africa welcomes regional efforts, including the outcome of the joint EAC-SADC Summit, which harmonised the Rwanda and Nairobi Processes and appointed a high-level panel of facilitators. South Africa is particularly pleased that former South African President Kgalema Petrus Motlanthe has been invited to join the facilitation team. South Africa wishes to pay tribute to the brave men and women of MONUSCO, together with those comprising the SADC Mission, which has now concluded its mandate. South Africa expresses its solidarity with the DRC and reaffirms its unwavering support for the DRC's territorial integrity and sovereignty. The people of eastern DRC are yearning for peace, and we dare not fail them.

Togo underscores that for three decades, the people of the eastern DRC has been the victim of extremely deadly conflict, whose hallmark is human rights violations and international law violations, including sexual violence and summary executions, especially of children, according to OHCHR reports. Togo deplores the use of heavy weaponry in densely populated areas, causing severe damage to social and economic infrastructures, and potentially harms the enjoyment of



human rights of the people who live in common areas. Furthermore, Togo commends human rights defenders who risk their lives to do their job, and we call for them to be protected. Togo believes that with a firm commitment and political will, it is possible to reestablish peace and stability in the eastern DRC. Undoubtedly, if we are more firmly committed, we can stop the flow of blood and tears and the macabre body count in the eastern DRC. The means to do so are within our reach, including in the context of the Luanda-Nairobi and Doha processes.

Egypt follows the developments in the eastern DRC and stresses once again its condemnation of all acts of violence that undermine peace and security, and we reiterate our steadfast commitment to the unity, sovereignty, and territorial integrity of the DRC. Egypt also fully supports all peaceful efforts aiming at containing the escalation and achieving stability, as well as a comprehensive and lasting settlement. Egypt calls upon the DRC's Government to pursue its effort in order to achieve peace and security and protect civilians, as well as providing humanitarian assistance and putting an end to impunity. It also stresses the importance of cooperation by the international community and regional partners to address the deterioration marked by the recent incidents and to provide the necessary support to the Eastern DRC, the country at large, as well as its national institutions.

At previous sessions of the Council, **Belgium** strongly condemned the violence in the East of the DRC. Belgium remains concerned by the situation of civilians, especially women and children. Many have been killed, injured, or displaced. Reports on attacks on human rights defenders and journalists in zones controlled by the M23 and the RDF are also worrying. Belgium calls on all parties to cooperate with the UNHRC Commission of Inquiry and also voices concern over reported corruption and poor governance, threatening the rule of law, institutional management, and the independence of the judiciary, given the shrinking civic and democratic space, evidenced in particular by arrests and interrogations of members of the opposition, civil society, and human rights defenders. Belgium calls on the authorities to protect and promote their role, and in particular freedom of expression and strengthen national cohesion.

Uruguay expresses concern at the worsening humanitarian and human rights situation, notably at the situation of women and girls who are victims of sexual violence and children exposed to severe violations, including forced recruitment. Uruguay is alarmed at the protection crisis which has unleashed conflict and had consequences in terms of a rise of displaced persons fleeing to neighbouring countries and the situation of the camps for IDPs which have been destroyed, leaving families unprotected. Uruguay is concerned with reports regarding the lack of financing as an obstacle to humanitarian efforts, leading to a catastrophic humanitarian situation. Uruguay calls for dialogue and for joining of forces for an immediate ceasefire and renewed negotiations under the Rwanda and Nairobi processes. States in the region must abstain from any act that would aggravate the situation and cooperate for a sustainable political solution. Uruguay reiterates its commitment to protecting civilians and building peace in the DRC as well as its support to MONUSCO at this difficult juncture.

Eritrea acknowledges the efforts of the DRC in advancing human rights and welcomes the continued engagement between the DRC and relevant international regional mechanisms in the area of technical assistance and capacity-building. Strengthening national institutions, enhancing legal frameworks and promoting inclusive governance are essential pillars for



sustained progress in human rights. In this regard, Eritrea emphasises the importance of tailored and constructive support that aligns with national priorities and respects the sovereignty of the DRC. Capacity-building initiatives should be designed to reinforce local ownership, empower national stakeholders and government institutions. Eritrea encourages relevant partners to work collaboratively with the DRC in a spirit of solidarity and partnership, ensuring that technical assistance translates into tangible improvements in the human rights situation and sustainable peace in the country.

Colombia stands with the people of the DRC as it suffers in this severe human rights situation with systematic sexual violence against women and girls used as a weapon of war. Colombia is gravely concerned that the humanitarian and food security situation affecting over 27 million people.

Colombia recognises the work of MONUSCO in protecting civilians and preventing violence. It commends the technical support to the state, in particular in transitional justice, combating impunity and institution-building. At the end of 2022, a delegation from the Human Rights Ministry of the DRC visited Colombia to equate itself with our transitional justice mechanisms for reparations of victims of the armed conflict and legal institutional framework. In 2023, Colombia hosted a second mission from the DRC under the Colombia to the World in Cooperation Programme under our Presidential Agency for International Cooperation, and PROCASUR, with an emphasis on building peace and exchanging good practise. Colombia hopes that the sharing of experience and successes, as well as difficulties, is useful for the DRC as it seeks peace.

Russia is attentively watching the situation of the DRC, which remains tense. Russia condemns the M23 movements of each of the countries concerned with the humanitarian consequences. The number of IDPs has risen by 500,000 since the start of the year, and millions of people need medical and food assistance, which is impossible because of the armed clashes. According to UNHCR's information, the clashes have led to the deaths of approximately 3,000 people. The priority today is conditions for long-term political and diplomatic settlement in the east of the DRC. Russia calls on the parties urgently to implement agreements reached under the Rwanda process and the resolutions of regional summits. Russia has consistently advocated for a depoliticised approach of the human rights mechanisms, including the UNHRC, to providing technical assistance and capacity-building with the support of the concerned country. This must facilitate improvement of the human rights situation in the countries and be carried out without politicisation or selectivity. The DRC needs prompt expert assistance from the UN human rights mechanisms and not sweeping criticisms of its authorities.

China expresses its deep condolences to the victims of the recent earthquake in Myanmar and expresses its sincere sympathy to the families of the injured and the communities affected in Myanmar and Thailand. China always firmly supports the DRC's sovereignty and territorial integrity, as well as its interest in security and development. Categorically, it condemns the M23 attack against the local residents and peacekeeping personnel and gives high attention to the eastern part of the country. China always advocates that, on the basis of the consent of the country concerned, technical assistance and capacity-building should be provided in accordance with the will and actual need, and human rights should never be an excuse to intervene in the country's internal affairs. China commends the DRC's efforts of promoting and



protecting human rights and encourages the international mechanisms and countries in the region to play a positive role. On the basis of a thorough consultation with the DRC, this should carry out technical cooperation and capacity building in line with the country's will. China will expeditiously implement all the measures under the China-Africa Cooperation Forum and provide support so as to help the DRC face the crisis and get through the challenging time.

Cameroon welcomes the efforts of the DRC's Government to build peace, provide stabilisation and promote human rights. Cameroon notes the initiatives undertaken to strengthen the rule of law and democratic governance despite the ongoing challenges. However, Cameroon regrets the persistent violence, especially in the east of the country, which continues to affect civilian populations and undermine development efforts. Gravely concerned at the severity of the crimes committed by armed groups, Cameroon calls for greater support from the international community to help the DRC address these security and humanitarian challenges. Cameroon reiterates the importance of technical assistance and capacity-building to support the DRC in building peace, combating impunity and establishing solid, resilient institutions. Cameroon commends the cooperation between the Government of the DRC, the African Union, the UN, MONUSCO and OHCHR, and encourages the continuation of these partnerships for lasting peace. Standing in solidarity with the people and the Government of the DRC, Cameroon reiterates its commitment to supporting their efforts for a just peace, inclusive development and respect for human rights.

The **Republic of Korea** expresses deep concern over the ongoing deteriorating human rights and situation in the Eastern DRC, particularly in North and South Kivu. Korea is deeply alarmed by the ongoing violence that is devastating impacts on civilians, which had led to the displacement of hundreds of thousands of people. Reports of sexual and gender-based violence and summary execution are especially concerning, underscoring the urgent need for accountability. In this regard, Korea looks forward to updates from the newly established Fact-Finding Mission on the DRC. The Republic of Korea calls on all parties to immediately cease hostilities and ensure safe and unhindered humanitarian access. It welcomes the momentous trilateral meeting between the DRC and Rwanda hosted by Qatar on March 18, which reaffirms the commitment to regional initiatives and urges both the DRC and Rwanda to continue meaningful diplomatic dialogue within regional frameworks.

Liechtenstein is deeply concerned about the human rights and humanitarian situation in the eastern part of the DRC. Liechtenstein strongly condemns the and systematic serious human rights violations, including the killing of civilians by the M23 armed group backed by the Rwandan Government, and calls for an immediate cessation of hostilities. Liechtenstein is horrified by the grave human rights violations against children, including forced recruitment, abduction, sexual violence, as well as cases of summary executions of children. Liechtenstein further deplores the devastating impact of the hostilities on women, including the widespread and systematic use of sexual and gender-based violence, as well as on human rights defenders. The protection of civilians, in particular women and children, must be the highest priority. Accountability efforts are important not only to hold perpetrators of serious human rights violations to account, but also to prevent further violations. Liechtenstein has supported the convening of a special session of the UNHRC in February of this year. OHCHR, the Commission of Enquiry, as well as the



International Criminal Court have important roles to play when it comes to investigating the situation. Liechtenstein calls on all parties to fully cooperate with these bodies.

The **United Kingdom (UK)** commends the DRC's strong engagement with the UNHRC during its membership so far, recognising in particular their leadership in convening the special session of the UNHRC last month. The UK is deeply concerned by the significant deterioration of the situation in eastern DRC, where M23 and Miranda Defence Force advances have displaced over 1 million people since January. A resolution to this conflict is vital. The UK encourages all parties to engage in good faith and refrain from inflammatory rhetoric. There are horrifying accounts of human rights abuses and violations perpetrated by all parties. The UK urges all parties to respect international humanitarian law, protect civilians, particularly from sexual and gender-based violence, and immediately end the abduction and recruitment of children. Lastly, the UK reiterates its objection to the death penalty in all circumstances, and once again urges the DRC to reconsider its decision to lift the moratorium on the death penalty.

The human rights situation in the DRC is of particular concern to **France**. The latter condemns the activities of M23 with the support of Rwanda, with security and humanitarian consequences, and reiterates its full support for the people of the DRC. The parties must respect their commitments. All efforts must be made for full humanitarian access, which is safe and unhindered. France calls for ongoing interstate dialogue under the regional processes. Among numerous human rights violations, France further voices its concern over sexual and gender-based violence and the summer executions. Fighting impunity must be a priority. Documenting violations and coordinating efforts among the various bodies is essential. France welcomes the establishment of the investigation mechanism and calls on the UNHRC to consider establishing an observatory under the Joint Office of the United Nations in Kinshasa.

South Sudan has taken note of the oral update of the Deputy HC and the Team of Experts on the DRC. It commends DRC for achieving significant progress in passing and promulgating important laws in a variety of areas, including the promotion and protection of human rights defenders, Indigenous people, people living with disabilities, as well as setting up the National Preparation Fund for victims of conflict-related sexual violence and other crimes against the peace and security of humanity in the country. South Sudan calls upon OHCHR and international partners to step up their financial support, technical assistance and capacity-building to enhance the transitional justice process in the DRC and to enable it to address other direct challenges, including security measures and humanitarian assistance for a largely displaced population.

Rwanda carefully followed the oral update by the Deputy HC and highlights that human rights violations in the DRC continue to be of high concern to the region as a majority of these violations are committed by the Government forces with their coalition. The consistent lack of political will by the DRC to address the root causes of this conflict is the key driver of human rights violations. The European Mercenaries and Wazalendo militia have aggravated human rights violations. Acts of persecution, hate speech, lynching and cannibalism targeting Congolese Tutsi communities must stop immediately. This act together with the DRC's recruitment of mercenaries must be condemned. To conclude, Rwanda remains committed to the African-led joint EAC-SADC process and other confidence-building initiatives to pave the way for lasting peace, security and stability in the region.



Worried about the extreme vulnerability affecting millions of Congolese, **Algeria** emphasises the vital importance of guaranteeing access to humanitarian assistance and reminds all parties of their obligations under IHL. The lives of civilians and humanitarian personnel must be protected. Assistance must be able to reach those who need it without obstacle. Humanitarian corridors must be respected. Algeria calls for an immediate unconditional ceasefire throughout the east of the DRC to allow resumption of dialogue for a political solution to end the suffering of the Congolese, ensure respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity and bring lasting peace in the region. Algeria entirely supports the regional processes underway and calls on all parties to rise to their commitments. Algeria commends the political efforts of the SADC and the EAC for a viable solution to the conflict and welcomes the recent decision of the joint EAC-SADC Summit in March 2025 to harmonise the Rwanda and Nairobi processes. The goal is lasting peace. We must address the root causes of the conflict, meet the hopes of the Congolese people and take into account their legitimate security concerns. Nothing can justify a continuation of this devastating conflict.

Welcoming the cooperation of the DRC with the UN human rights mechanisms, **Sudan** underscores that the DRC has brought political and judicial reforms to the table with transitional justice and disaster management. Sudan has attentively followed with concern the events in the east of the country and agree that these incidents have an impact on regional stability. Sudan supports the principle of 'African-led solutions to African conflicts'. Work must continue to reach peace everywhere in the DRC.

Kenya commends the Council's continued focus on support in the DRC and its efforts to promote human rights, justice and peace. Kenya recognises the progress made by the DRC's Government. However, Kenya remains deeply concerned about the ongoing security challenges in eastern DRC, including armed group activities, displacement of civilians, and violations of human rights, which disproportionately impact on women and children. These issues demand sustained regional and international efforts to achieve lasting peace. Kenya has been committed to fostering peace and stability in DRC and the broader Great Lakes region. As a chair of the East African Community and a key participant in the Nairobi and Rwanda processes, Kenya welcomes the joint efforts by the SADC and the EAC, which have reinforced regional mechanisms for peacebuilding. This framework demonstrates the importance of continental solidarity in addressing regional insecurity and promoting stability. Kenya emphasises that technical assistance must be aligned with national priorities of DRC when addressing cross-border dimensions of insecurity. Kenya urges all stakeholders to ensure that support strengthens local capacities for governance, justice and human rights protection.

Ireland welcomes the engagement of the DRC with OHCHR and the UNHRC. Ireland is deeply concerned at the continuing conflict in eastern DRC. The M23 offensive supported by Rwanda has exacerbated the grave humanitarian crisis in the region and contributed to human rights violations and abuses. Ireland is extremely concerned by the reported violations of IHL, including the targeting of civilian populations, the summary execution of children by armed actors engaged in the conflict and the documented widespread conflict-related sexual violence. Ireland calls on all parties to the conflict to fulfil their obligations towards civilian populations; to halt all attacks against civilians; and to ensure safe and unhindered humanitarian access. All perpetrators must be held accountable. Ireland supports the African-led regional initiatives to address the situation



and urges all parties to the conflict to implement the roadmap adopted by the EAC and the SADC to obtain a sustainable peace and security in the region.

Views Expressed by intergovernmental Organizations

The **European Union** is deeply concerned about the escalation of violence in the DRC and the worsening of the situation. The EU is horrified when we see here the information, the reports about extrajudicial executions and SGBV, persecution of human rights defenders, as well as forced recruitment. Furthermore we deplore the decision taken by the DRC to lift the moratorium on the death penalty. The EU restates that the M23 must withdraw immediately. It firmly condemns the presence of Rwandan forces in the DRC and calls upon Rwanda to stop its support for M23 and to withdraw. The EU also joins the DRC to end its cooperation with the FDLR and other armed groups. The EU calls for the implementation of a ceasefire and the resumption of dialogue. The EU has supported the Rwanda and Nairobi processes and will continue to support all stakeholders so that they can respect their commitments. The EU hopes that the establishment of the double mechanism at the special session of the UNHRC will make it possible for progress to be made to combat impunity.

Views Expressed by Non-Governmental Organizations

Réveil communautaire d'assistance aux victimes gives the floor to a human rights defender in the DRC, whose father has been arbitrarily detained for over two years without any trial. In August 2022, he was detained by the Congolese intelligence. He was held in a facility without any support for over a year. He is in Makala prison now. With the mass escape of last September, conditions there are very unsafe. Every day is a day too many and a threat to his life. Conveying his family's distress at the situation in my country. Please hear my voice. People must be allowed to defend themselves. His father needs a fair trial. If he is innocent as they know, he should be freed. He has spent his life serving others. He is now plunged into silence. He is forgotten. In the name of justice and humanity, he calls on the Council to free his father.

Centre Europe-Tiers Monde states that the DRC war has entered a new spiral, bringing deaths of thousands of civilians. This is the direct result of growing demand for strategic metals by countries of the north, which finance armed groups like the M23, with the support of Rwanda, profiting from illegal exploitation of the DRC's resources. This is not, in fact, a new war. It is a tragic continuation of what was outlined in the mapping report of the United Nations almost 20 years ago, which documents the mass crimes committed in the east of the DRC. In this context, the Centre asks the UNHRC three essential questions. One, in the mapping report it is stated that certain crimes may constitute genocide if an enquiry is carried out. When is that enquiry going to happen? Two, many voices in Congo called for an international criminal court for the DRC. How many more deaths are we going to wait for before such a court is established? And three, the UAE-Rwanda agreement increases the pillaging of natural resources from the DRC.

FIACAT and its partners within Congolese civil society reiterate their concern at the extremely alarming situation of human rights defenders and judicial workers in zones occupied by M23 and its allies. They cannot carry out their work or leave their homes without suffering reprisals or being forcibly recruited. Since January, most human rights defenders and lawyers in North and South Kivu have had to leave their homes to take refuge in neighbouring provinces or countries. Cases



of torture in the provinces of the east were mentioned by the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders. In the context of sexual violence, which is endemic, and many cases of sexual violence have been documented since January, FIACAT and its partners are particularly alarmed at violence against women human rights defenders. The collapse of the judicial system and the prison escapes bring additional risk to human rights defenders and judicial workers who contributed to their trials. FIACAT, FIDH and partners call on the international community to support the establishment of an urgent mechanism to assist human rights defenders and meet their vital needs in the short term as well as allowing them to be re-localised temporarily.

Ensemble contre la Peine de Mort (ECPM) explains that the DRC, since 2003, had had a moratorium. Now, in March 2024, the moratorium was lifted. Recognising the fact that executions have not resumed, ECPM notes that 490 persons have been sentenced to the death penalty in 2024, namely, a 300% increase as compared to 2023. Death row now is around 1400 persons. ECPM, the Congolese Coalition Against the Death Penalty and FIACAT regret the fact that the Congolese authorities have accepted no recommendation made on the death penalty at the latest UPR. ECPM calls upon the President to continue to focus on restoring the rule of law and respect the constitution which embodies the right to life in Articles 16 and 61 as well as the international conventions ratified by the DRC, in particular the ICCPR. The DRC today is one of the last two states of Central Africa not having abolished the death penalty. ECPM recommends that the authorities give up executions, make official the moratorium, guarantee the respect for fair trial, continue to commute all death penalties, and abolish the death penalty.

Centre du Commerce International pour le Développement warns against the risk of 'Balkanization' of the DRC given the complexity and gravity of the crisis. It calls on all parties to observe an immediate ceasefire, to allow humanitarian organisations to save lives and displaced people to return in safety and dignity. In view of the dramatic situation that prevails, the Centre condemns in strong terms all the massive violations of IHRL and IHL in the provinces of North and South Kivu, and the military logistics support provided by the Rwanda Defence Force to the M23. It recalls that targeting United Nations personnel and humanitarian access constitutes a war crime, and urges the Congolese authority to investigate all incidents and to bring those responsible to justice before national or international courts. The Centre deplores Rwanda's refusal to participate in the 80th March Dialogue and demands that Rwanda and the M23 immediately put an end to their act of aggression against the DRC and to serious the violations of human rights as well as to immediately withdraw from the occupied territory of the DRC. The Centre strongly supports the establishment of an independent FFM to investigate the crimes and serious violations of IHRL and IHL committed by the belligerents in the province North and South Kivu in the east of the DRC. Reaffirming its solidarity with the victims, the Centre affirms its unwavering support to the preservation of unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the DRC.

The **Human Rights Research League** is concerned at the human rights situation in the eastern part of the DRC. Since the towns of Bukavu and Goma were occupied by the AFC-M23 troops, this armed conflict situation has given rise to mass displacement of populations and mass human rights violations. According to reports, when Goma was taken, 9,000 people died including many civilians in Bukavu. There were no fights, however. There have been cases of killings, summary executions, robberies, mob lynchings. The ICRC has recorded 400 deaths when Bukavu was taken. The Human Rights Research League also stresses the deterioration of the economic



situation because of the closure of Goma as airport and the banks. This deterioration is worsened by mass displacement of Congolese citizens internally and neighbouring countries more than urgently. Humanitarian aid is needed to reach the public. This situation runs counter to IHL. The League calls on all belligerents to abide by the resolutions adopted at the Summit and demands an immediate and unconditional ceasefire. Dialogue must continue in the context of the Rwandan and Nairobi Peace Processes and lead to de-escalation between Rwanda and the DRC.

REFORMAF welcomes the UNHRC resolution in February of a creation of a FFM on the serious human rights violations committed in North Kivu and South Kivu since January 2022. This decision also supports similar efforts made by the ICC to investigate crimes committed in North Kivu. However, REFORMAF is deeply concerned about the systematic deterioration of the human rights situation and the escalation of the security crisis in the east of the DRC over the last two months. This crisis is linked to the territorial expansion of the AFC and the M23 supported by the RDF which have set up paramilitary forces and customary military services and continue to receive taxes and enlist. Many people have become IDPs or have died. The situation is disastrous.

FIDH and its member organisations are deeply concerned about civilians which are the target of the armed conflict as M23-AFC has taken control. The various mechanisms of investigation need to be coordinated and efforts in this field must be supported. Crimes committed by all parties should be investigated, especially sexual and gender-based violence. Mass escapes from certain prisons and mass rapes committed on detained women before they die in the fire in the prison of Goma also raise deep concern. FIDH calls for investigations and better detention conditions. Human rights defenders continue to be the target of attacks and reprisals from all parties to the conflict. FIDH calls for the creation of an emergency assistance mechanism over the long term to support its activities.

CIVICUS states that the escalating conflict in the Eastern DRC between DRC forces and M23 forces backed by Rwanda has resulted in devastating consequences with over 8,500 casualties reported since January and 5,000 in Goma alone. The occupation of territories in North and South Kivu has seen the perpetration of summer killings, conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence, abductions, discriminated attacks against civilians and frequent bombing of sites hosting IDPs. Of particular concern is the growing censorship and intimidation of the independent press and restrictions on social media and internet access, which continues to severely hinder the right to access to information and freedom of expression for civil society actors. Despite aid efforts by humanitarian agencies, insecurity hampers both media and civil society activities and humanitarian relief, forcing human rights defenders (HRDs), activists and journalists into hiding or exile. CIVICUS strongly calls on states and institutions to uphold IHL in the DRC, allowing for the reopening of the Goma airport and permitting humanitarian activities in the Red Zone. Furthermore, CIVICUS calls on the UNHRC to adopt a strong resolution on the human rights situation in the DRC with a focus on the protection of HRDs at risk. It urges states to provide support, including through adequate funding for the newly established FFM to allow the prompt collection of information and investigation into grave human rights violations, and the stocktaking of possible accountability options to further pave the way for the mandate of the Commission of Inquiry.



Shaanxi Patriotic Volunteer Association makes two comments. First, on the balance between international responsibilities, patriotism and progress made, Law 22-065 of the DRC creates a mechanism to protect against sexual violence and the recruitment of child soldiers attests to international commitments. True patriotism begins with protecting the vulnerable. Second, security is the basis for stability. The Association supports regional mediation through the Nairobi and Rwanda Peace Processes which are in tune with the Association's vision of the country and should receive the support of other countries. The Association recommends that international technical assistance be provided to give priority to cross-border mechanisms, given that the regional stability amounts to an extension of national interests in the prospect of a shared human future and sovereignty. The Association is against selfish actions. Governments should be transparent and remain open to international scrutiny. There should be bridges between countries, not a handbrake.

FACTS & FIGURES ON ID PARTICIPATION

26 State Delegations

1 Inter-Governmental Organization

10 Non-Governmental Organizations