



GENEVA CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS
ADVANCEMENT AND GLOBAL DIALOGUE

UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

Enhanced Interactive Dialogue on the Oral Update of the Fact-Finding Mission on the Situation in the South and North Kivu Provinces of the Democratic Republic of Congo

#HRC59 • 16 June 2025



PRESENTATION OF THE ORAL UPDATE

H.E. Mr. Volker TÜRK, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

Sharing his predecessors' concern and his own for years over the DRC, the High Commissioner emphasises the increasingly serious and alarming situation the country is confronted with. **All parties to the conflict** in North and South Kivu have committed violations or abuses of human rights and violations of international humanitarian law (IHL).

Disregard for IHL and human rights by all parties

That is the preliminary finding of his Office's Fact-Finding Mission (FFM), set up by the UNHRC four months ago, which will present a report to this Council and to the General Assembly in September 2025. The investigation and analysis undertaken by the FFM reveal an apparent total disregard for the protection of civilians during and after military operations.

The Rwandan-backed N23 used **heavy weaponry** during their offensive on Goma in January, hitting densely populated neighbourhoods and camps for displaced persons. As the DRC armed forces retreated, there was an apparent total breakdown in the chain of command, control and



military discipline as DRC soldiers and members of the DRC-backed Wazalendo militias killed, raped and pillaged. OHCHR is investigating other alleged violations of IHL, many of which may amount to **war crimes**.

An horrific panoply of violations and abuses

After capturing cities and villages, the **M23** arbitrarily arrested police officers and a large number of other civilians, including children. M23 fighters also captured DRC soldiers and forced some to join the M23. Witnesses have told OHCHR that those captured were and still are held in inhumane conditions at military camps, such as Rumangabo and in informal places of detention. Many were **forcibly recruited** into the ranks of the M23. The latter carried out **summary and extrajudicial executions** in clear violation of IHL and human rights law, likely amounting to war crimes. The M23 used **torture and other forms of ill-treatment** to impose order, to force people to work and to suppress dissent and extract information.

The FFM is also investigating alleged summary executions by members of the **DRC armed forces** and **Wazalendo militias**. The FFM received reports that Wazalendo militias arbitrarily arrested and abducted people to extort money and carried out summary punishments in areas under their control. The FFM is also investigating alleged arbitrary arrests and enforced disappearances of suspected M23 supporters by the military intelligence arm of the DRC armed forces.

The FFM received reports of **horrific use of sexual violence by all parties** to the conflict in North Kivu and South Kivu as a means of reprisal against certain communities, the relatives of perceived opponents and against people from other ethnic groups. Nearly 40 percent of survivors of sexual and gender-based violence are children. UNICEF estimates that during the most intense phase of the conflict, a **child was raped every 30 minutes**. Victims and survivors often lack access or have no access to treatment and post-exposure prophylaxis kits because of the widespread destruction of medical facilities by parties to the conflict and cuts by international donors to humanitarian funding. OHCHR is investigating reports of **recruitment of children**, teenage children, to the M23 and various Wazalendo militias to use them in armed conflict.

The plight of displacement and damage to civilian infrastructure

Hundreds of thousands of displaced people are suffering the worst impact of the fighting in North Kivu and South Kivu. The violence has forced an estimated one million people from their homes or from one temporary location to another. Many displaced people reported that M23 fighters forced them to dismantle their shelters and move. In Goma, in early February, they were given just three days to return to their villages, where many found their houses had been destroyed or occupied.

As of March 2025, OHCHR found that many displaced people, including those who had been forced to return to their villages across North Kivu and South Kivu, were **struggling to feed themselves** and to access basic health care. Schools, hospitals and water systems, for example, suffered extensive damage during the fighting in Masisi and Rotorua.

Silencing critical voices among HRDs, journalists and civil society

The violence in North Kivu and South Kivu has shrunk this space for human rights defenders, civil society and the media. OHCHR is investigating reports of **death threats, detention and other**



reprisals against human rights defenders (HRDs), journalists and members of civil society perceived as critical of the M23. This includes the alleged killings of at least two activists and threats against human rights defenders working to support survivors of sexual and gender-based violence. The DRC authorities have **suspended press accreditation** and threatened legal consequences against journalists and others whose reporting is considered too favourable to the M23 and Rwandan forces.

Health under attack

Health and humanitarian workers have also faced **threats**, intimidation and violence. This, along with deep cuts in international humanitarian funding, risks the **spread of preventable diseases**, including polio and measles, well beyond the DRC's borders. In one harrowing example, during the night of 28 February, M23 fighters raided two hospitals in Goma, the Ndoshoh Hospital and the Heal Africa Hospital. According to reports, they fired weapons inside the buildings and abducted 121 patients, accusing them of being DRC soldiers or members of the Wazalendo militias. The location of the majority of these **abducted individuals** remains unknown.

An urgent call for a ceasefire and negotiations

The scale and range of violations and abuses the FFM is documenting are horrendous. It is deeply disturbing that clashes are continuing unabated in North Kivu and South Kivu. The High Commissioner calls on all parties to the conflict to commit immediately to a ceasefire and resume negotiations and to respect IHL and human rights. He further reiterates his call to **Rwanda to withdraw its troops** from the DRC territory and end its support to the M23.

Urging all countries with influence on parties to the conflict to encourage their respect for international law, the High Commissioner calls on them to do everything in their power to address the serious human rights and humanitarian crisis in this region and to **support mediation efforts** with a view to finding a lasting solution, including by addressing the root causes of instability. Finally, the FFM has collected and analysed a wealth of evidence to support accountability processes from victims and witnesses in the DRC, Rwanda and Burundi, other states, United Nations partners and members of the civil society.

Amidst UN liquidity crisis, continued financial support is vital

Today, due to the current financial situation at OHCHR, the FFM could only operate by using reserve funds. It is unlikely, as things stand, that there will be any regular budget funding this year for the Commission of Enquiry mandated by the UNHRC to continue this work. OHCHR will do everything possible to access regular budget funds as early as possible in 2026 for the establishment of the Commission. In closing, the High Commissioner pleads for continued political and financial support for OHCHR's work in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

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

On request of the DRC's government, the FFM attests to the determination of the DRC to shed all possible light on the serious and recurrent crimes that have afflicted the people of the east. The DRC has condemned and identified ongoing violations of human rights in the country such as sexual and gender-based violence in connection with the conflict; summary executions,



abductions and forced disappearances; targeted attacks against Indigenous peoples; the targeting of human rights defenders, civil society actors, journalists and peace soldiers; and the bombing of IDPs sites, hospitals and schools.

Requests formulated by the UNHRC remaining unfulfilled

UNHRC Resolution S-37/1 condemned firmly the military and logistics support of the Rwandan Defence Force or M23 to the AFC (*Alliance Fleuve Congo*) which sadly continues to give rise to many civilian victims, giving rise to new displacement and triggering significant trauma amongst the public. In order to prevent new IHL and human rights in the two provinces of Kivu, the members of the UNHRC had demanded that the M23 and AFC cease all hostile action and withdraw from the occupied areas, and asked the Rwandan Defence Forces to stop providing any support to the M23 and the AFC and to immediately withdraw from the DRC. Despite these requests, the government of Rwanda and its army are actually strengthening the presence of their troops on the Congolese territory and continue to support militarily and logistically M23 and the AFC in their mass violations of human rights and the human rights of the peoples in these two provinces with disastrous humanitarian consequences.

A multitude of reported IHL and human rights violations

Since the of the attacks by the Rwandan armies and its acolytes M23 and AFC in January 2025, the first elements drawn from the data of the monitoring of the Ministry of Human Rights still underway on the basis of the formula designed by the FFM attest to *inter alia* the following:

- Violations of the protected goods, civilian property and health facilities, with at least five hospitals destroyed.
- Violation of the right to education, with 14 schools, vocational training schools destroyed in the North Kivu.
- Over 2,082 reported cases of sexual and gender-based violence.
- Over 2,000 reported cases of enforced disappearance and 1,850 cases of deported persons.
- Over 1,800 cases of individual summary executions and over 15 cases of mass slaughters during which 2,100 people died.
- Thousands of reported cases of torture and cruel and degrading treatment and punishment.

In the face of all these dehumanising actions amounting to genocide, only a firm and proportionate reaction of the international community will make it possible for the human rights to prevail in the country. The hour of passive complicity is over.

A commitment to truth, justice and reparations for victims

The government of the DRC reiterates its unwavering commitment to the fundamental rights of victims and in particular their rights to truth, justice, reparation. In this respect, it has chosen to focus on resolute action and has implemented transitional justice, including reparation and memorial components enshrined in a national policy adopted in May last year. As eloquent proof of the DRC's commitment the Minister cites the adoption of the national policy in May last year



alongside the bill on the transitional justice and the institutionalisation of the Fund for Victims provided by the UN. Seventeen million dollars set aside for victims.

Ms. Nelly MBAGU, Human Rights Defender and Lawyer at the Bar of North Kivu Province of the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Stressing the crucial importance of addressing the deep causes of insecurity and to shed light on the impact of the conflict on women and girls, women human rights defenders. Ms. Nelly MBAGU calls upon the UNHRC :

- to continue supporting the efforts aimed at investigating and bringing all parties responsible for criminal atrocities to respond to justice;
- to condemn threats and attacks against civilians and civil infrastructure, human rights defenders, journalists and civil society;
- to shed light on the impact of this crisis on women, children and all marginalised people in the Democratic Republic of Congo;
- to make operational an effective protection mechanism for human rights defenders, and to include security measures, the possibility of temporary relocation, and legal support in their favour;
- to multiply visits to the Democratic Republic of Congo by Special Procedures on issues related to human rights and human rights defenders.

Ms. Nelly MBAGU calls on the international community to urgently **intensify humanitarian aid** by providing quality and flexible funding to the national and international organisations of civil society, in particular organisations led by women, in order to support their interventions on the ground and maintain the supply of aid where it is most necessary, while the conditions continue to deteriorate.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

For **accountability and combating impunity**, the **Minister of Human Rights of the DRC** points out that Government of the DRC is tirelessly continuing to advocate in favour of the creation of an International Criminal Court for the DRC. Experts and heads of security services of the DRC and Rwanda have agreed on a **plan to neutralise the FDLR**, which should be signed on 15 of December 2024 in the context of the Luamba process. But the Rwandan President had shined by his absence, hiding behind his own pretences. The DRC is a sovereign state **committed to combat hate speech and ethnic discrimination**. There are 400 ethnic groups in the DRC. The latter has adopted laws, ratified international treaties, relevant ones, and implemented internal mechanisms to prevent inter-community strife. Combating hate speech gives no right to a foreign state to intervene militarily on a third party. Such an action amounts to a violation of the Charter and international law. UN reports clearly establish that Rwanda actively supports M23 and AFC, which are responsible for serious crimes against civilians and mass displacement of Congolese populations. The security of Congolese people, including the Rwandan-speaking communities, are the responsibility of the Congolese authorities. In no case can anyone else replace the DRC's responsibility, even less by arming rebels and attacking the armed forces of the DRC.

Ms. Maarit KOHONEN SHERIFF, Director of the Global Operations Division, OHCHR, explains that the FFM has not yet visited North Kivu and South Kivu provinces, but after a thorough



protection risk assessment and also safety and security analysis, the FFM is indeed planning to proceed to visit North and South Kivu shortly. In this regard, OHCHR would appreciate any assistance that the international community can provide to support access of the FFM to areas under the control of the M23. On the fervent wish that the COI should be set up without delay, she states that in the current circumstances, the FFM will present its final report in September 2025, and there are **no regular budget resources available** in 2025 to proceed with establishing the Commission this year. However, OHCHR will do its utmost to ensure that the COI could be set up in 2026, but it depends on the availability of regular budget resources in early 2026. OHCHR calls on states to assure that these funds could be made available to OHCHR to enable the **establishment of the COI**.

In reply to a question, the Director of the Global Operations Division assures the UNHRC that any **information or evidence** gathered by the FFM will be preserved and archived in accordance with our usual protocols and ready to be handed over when the COI is able to start its work. Whilst there may be a **gap in accountability work** in the strictest sense, there is a UN Joint Human Rights Officers' team on the ground in the DRC, which will continue their monitoring and reporting work as well as their support to human rights defenders and national institutions. Information will continue to be forthcoming as we await for the COI to be established.

In reply to some queries on further action by the UNHRC, OHCHR calls on all **states with influence** to do everything within their power to ensure that the parties to the conflict will cease hostilities and engage constructively in peace negotiations to find a political solution with effective guarantees for human rights and accountability. It is equally critical to recognise, analyse, and curb the international and regional **business interests that continue to fuel the conflict**. And we also encourage member states to support ongoing peace and accountability processes that, one, allow for the participation of victims, take into account victims' voices and their specific needs, and enable them to define solutions for accountability and reparations for the future. Finally, and I complete with this, Mr. Chairman, I just wish to offer a word of encouragement and solidarity to our own colleagues on the ground, but especially to the human rights defenders who play an essential role in promoting human rights in the DRC and who risk their lives and safety to fight for a peaceful and prosperous Congo.

VIEWS EXPRESSED BY RWANDA AS CONCERNED COUNTRY

Remaining that the FFM is tasked with identifying the deep-rooted causes of a conflict that has persisted over three decades, the **delegation of Rwanda** states that the FFM must be conducted with impartiality and free from political interference. Its work shall not be steered toward validating any one-sided narrative, but instead contributes to a balanced understanding of the situation on the ground. For more than 30 years, the insecurity in the eastern DRC has posed a direct and persistent threat to Rwanda's territorial integrity and the safety of its citizens, due to which Rwanda has taken appropriate defence measures to protect its population. Since late 2021, Rwanda has faced a disturbing escalation of hostile actions originating from the DRC. Of particular concern is the reinforced collaboration between the Congolese Army and the Kinshasa-backed FDLR, a UN-sanctioned armed group composed of individuals responsible for the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda, which continued to propagate a genocidal ideology in the Great Lakes.



The eastern DRC is home to approximately 200 armed groups, further contributing to the persistent instability in the region. Of concern are also the numerous attacks by the DRC against Rwanda, including cross-border shelling, repeated violation of our airspace by DRC jet fighters, enforced disappearances of Rwandan nationals in the DRC, and an organised campaign of hate speech and incitement against Congolese Rwanda communities. Furthermore, the M23 is a movement made up of Congolese citizens, predominantly from Rwandan communities who have long suffered human rights violations, marginalisation, and discrimination. Their grievances are not foreign-sponsored, as it is often claimed and mentioned in the oral update, but rooted in structural exclusion, hate speech, and persecution. These are governance failures that must be addressed by the DRC government.

Rwanda reaffirms its commitment to the peace process in the eastern DRC, mostly notably active participation in the African-led peace framework, as well as the complementary efforts in Doha and Washington, with the ultimate goal of achieving lasting peace, security, and prosperity for all. The East African Community and SADC peace process rightfully includes the establishment of humanitarian corridors as part of its framework. Rwanda urges the international community to prioritise and support this African-led initiative in both political and humanitarian terms. Standing ready to engage in constructive dialogue provided that the work of the FFM remains impartial and free from politicisation, Rwanda recalls that only by addressing the structural drivers of conflict in eastern DRC can the Council begin to restore trust and relevance in a region that has been too often failed by the international community.

As concluding remarks, Rwanda stresses that the crisis in the eastern DRC requires an honest and transparent engagement with its underlying causes, rooted in decades of internal governance challenges and complex dynamics. The proliferation of arms among local militias, the weaponizing of ethnic divisions, and the recruitment of children into armed groups are alarming trends that destabilises the region and demands immediate attention. Lasting peace is possible through constructive peace process, particularly via the African-led initiative under the African Union. This framework offers a credible path grounded in mutual respect, security, accountability, and shared prosperity. The humanitarian crisis unfolding is the direct consequence of the inability of the DRC to govern its own territory and to ensure respectful human rights. For the whole population, this responsibility can and must not be outsourced.

INTERACTIVE DIALOGUE

Views Expressed by State Delegations

Algeria remains deeply concerned by the humanitarian situation in the eastern DRC and recalls all parties' obligation to respect international humanitarian law and grant humanitarian access. Algeria advocates for a political approach to put an end to the suffering of the Congolese, to respect the sovereignty and the territorial integrity of the DRC, and also hear the legitimate security concerns of its neighbours. Fully supporting the efforts underway in the African Union and the sub-regional organisations, Algeria welcomes the recent appointment of the President of the Republic of Togo as a mediator.

Australia remains gravely concerned by reports of human rights violations and abuses and possible breaches of international humanitarian law in North and South Kivu. Australia is



appalled by reports that multiple actors involved in the conflict are systematically using sexual violence as a weapon of war against women and children. Allegations of unlawful killings, arbitrary detention, and the use of torture by M23 are alarming. Australia reiterates its call for Rwanda to cease its support to M23 and to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the DRC. Reports of abuses by Wazalando militias against civilians cannot be ignored. It further calls on Congolese authorities to end their support for Wazalando groups and impartially investigate and prosecute those responsible for human rights abuses.

Austria, deeply concerned about the continued violence in the eastern DRC, condemns the ongoing violence against civilians, including displaced persons and children. Austria is alarmed by the high levels of conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence, with children accounting for up to 45 percent of the nearly 10,000 reported cases in just two months. Firmly believing that there can be no sustainable peace without justice, the persistent impunity for grave human rights violations must be addressed without delay. In closing, it stresses the need to address the root causes of the conflict and support efforts to enhance transparency and responsible governance.

Belgium continues to support its fully independent, rigorous and transparent monitoring of the violations and human rights violations in the east of the DRC, as well as methodical collection of data crucial to establish truth, justice and accountability. It advocates for the expeditious setting-up of the Commission of Inquiry (COI). Belgium firmly condemns the many violations of international human rights law, especially sexual and gender-based violence, forced recruitment, extrajudicial killings, torture, attacks against defenders, as well as forced return of refugees. It calls upon the M23, the Rwandan Army, the Congolese Army, the Wazalendo, the FDLR and all other armed groups to refrain immediately from committing any violations of human rights, while urging them to fully cooperate with the FFM and strengthen accountability mechanisms.

Botswana expresses deep concern over the reported escalation of violence, extrajudicial killings, sexual and gender-based violence, and mass displacement of affected civilians, particularly women and children. It strongly condemns the activities of armed groups which continue to destabilise the region and perpetuate violence. The violations of international humanitarian law and human rights abuses demand urgent accountability by the perpetrators. Botswana calls upon all the parties to reaffirm their commitment to the Luanda and Nairobi peace processes, which are vital for fostering regional stability, peace, and cooperation. Furthermore, it urges the governments and regional actors to strengthen cooperation with the UN Stabilisation Mission and the DRC as well as the African Union initiatives to restore peace and stability. In closing, it calls for technical assistance to the DRC to strengthen its judicial and human rights institutions.

Burundi welcomed the delegation of the FFM in order to find facts on the ground, particularly amongst the large population of Congolese refugees in the country. It calls on the international community for support in dealing with this massive influx of people, and ensuring their dignity, as well as that of the host community. Financial support for OHCHR's mandate with regard to achieving accountability, finding legal responsibility for the grave violations of human rights under IHL and the attacks against civil populations in the DRC - is everybody's duty.

Cameroon remains deeply concerned by the ongoing serious violence in the provinces of North Kivu and South Kivu, notably the massacre of civilians, conflict-related sexual violence, and forced displacement. Cameroon reaffirms its untiring solidarity with the government of the DRC,



confronted with the many threats to national security. The UNHCR shall work to strengthen institutional resilience and reporting and accountability while respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the DRC. Cameroon welcomes the efforts being carried out under the aegis of the African Union, the ICGLR and the SADC and the East African Community in the processes of Rwanda and Nairobi. In closing, it stresses the need to provide urgent humanitarian access.

China is deeply concerned over the humanitarian situation and welcomes the dialogue between the DRC and Rwanda to address their security concerns. China appreciates the mediation efforts of the relevant countries and regional organisations and advocates for African solutions to African problems. China calls on the parties to abide by international law, work for an immediate ceasefire, return to the track of diplomatic dialogue and implement UNSC Resolution 2773. The relevant discussions and actions of the Council should reflect international solidarity and create conditions conducive to a political solution. China is ready to work with the international community to play a constructive role in cooling down the situation and realising lasting peace.

Colombia describes the work of the FFM as fundamental to guaranteeing the right to truth, justice, and redress for victims, contributing to ensuring the violations of human rights and international humanitarian law do not go unpunished, and that perpetrators have to account for their acts before the judicial system. In the framework of the Africa Strategy for 2022-2026, which seeks to strengthen ties with the African continent through South-South cooperation, Colombia is prepared, if the DRC considers it useful, to continue sharing its experience in the area of transitional justice.

Egypt condemns any act of violence which undermines security and peace, and welcomes the agreement in principle between the DRC and Rwanda, which is a step forward and towards peace, stability, and economic development in the region. Egypt is in favour of efforts that seek

Ethiopia notes with concern the escalating violence by armed groups has led to devastating human consequences and urgent action is needed to restore peace. In line with the African Union's commitment to peace and stability, Ethiopia supports the EU Commission's call for an immediate cessation of hostilities and the protection of civilians. Ethiopia also supports the EU Peace and Security Council's call for strict adherence to international humanitarian and human rights law. Protecting civilians, displaced persons, medical facilities and peacekeepers is paramount. The African Union must continue its leadership role, especially in coordinating support for law and the process and Addis Ababa framework. Ethiopia urges increased international support for state building in eastern DRC and scaling up humanitarian assistance. Regional frameworks must be further reinforced to effectively address the security and humanitarian challenges in the region.

France is concerned by the disastrous security and humanitarian consequences in the east DRC. Renewing its support to the people of the DRC, France underscores that every effort must be made to guarantee a complete, safe and unfettered humanitarian access. Calling upon the ongoing further pursuit of dialogue in the context of regional processes, France encourages the FFM to work in close cooperation with the team of experts, the Special Envoy, the new Commission of Enquiry on the DRC to continue the work on the violations of human rights, establish facts, and shed light on events. France calls upon the FFM to closely analyse hate



speech, find ways to combat it and stem its spread, especially through the creation of a dedicated observatory under the aegis of the OHCHR's Office in Kinshasa.

Germany condemns in the strongest terms reported violations of international humanitarian law and human rights, including arbitrary and summary killings and the use of sexual and gender-based violence as a weapon of war. This conflict must end and we condemn the ongoing military activities by the M23 supported by the Rwandan Armed Forces. Germany regrets that the establishment of the COI is delayed by budget shortfalls. Germany expresses its support to OHCHR in its efforts to form the COI as soon as possible and calls on all member states to ensure OHCHR is adequately funded.

Ghana remains hopeful that the FFM and other related mechanisms will contribute to and reinforce other critical interventions at the regional level towards ending the cycle of impunity in eastern DRC. Admittedly, the conflict in eastern DRC is not just about an armed struggle among illegal armed groups, but a longstanding struggle for the illicit exploitation of the country's mineral resources, as confirmed by multiple UN reports. Ghana deplores the risks faced by the civilian population and underlines the need for accountability for all atrocities committed against civilians. Ghana urges that the work of the FFM should focus on the root causes of the conflict and the endless violence which has unfortunately robbed the communities in eastern DRC of the tranquilly required for sustained stability and socio-economic development.

Iran welcomes the efforts made by the government and in the region, in particular by the African Union for peaceful settlement. While believing that country-specific mandates have not remained any positive record of promotion and protection of human rights, Iran strongly believes that negotiations, cooperation, and mutual understanding is still the best ensuring way ahead. In solidarity with the people and government of the DRC that face serious security and human rights challenges, Iran calls on all parties involved in the conflict to place broader national interest in both divisions and to engage in an inclusive political process aimed at ending the violence which continues to claim innocent lives.

Ireland is extremely concerned by the reports of human rights abuses and violations perpetrated by all parties to the conflict, including torture, abduction, recruitment of child soldiers, summary executions, documented widespread conflict-related sexual violence, and intimidation and attacks against human rights defenders and civil society. Ireland calls on all sides to respect their obligations under international humanitarian law, protect civilian populations, and ensure safe and unhindered humanitarian access. All perpetrators must be held accountable and all parties to the conflict must address the issue of impunity. Ireland welcomes the international peace efforts underway and is concerned by reported violations of ceasefire agreements by parties to the conflict, which hinder efforts to find a long-term solution. It encourages all parties to engage in these processes in good faith to attain sustainable peace, security, and justice in the region.

Japan is deeply concerned by the devastating human rights situation in eastern DRC, where violence and insecurity have hampered humanitarian access to the conflict-affected areas. Civilians, especially women and girls, face an alarming level of risk of trafficking, exploitation, and conflict-related sexual violence. Threats to school security are acute as thousands of children are no longer in education. Once again, Japan calls for all parties to the conflict to unconditionally respect human rights and international humanitarian law. The international community must act



collectively to ensure respect for the protection of civilians in eastern DRC, including women and children, through the active engagement of all parties to accelerate these political consultations in order to achieve a lasting peaceful solution to the conflict.

Kenya reiterates its profound solidarity with the Congolese people who have endured immense suffering as a result of continued violence, displacement, and violation of international human rights and humanitarian law. As a committed regional partner, Kenya actively supports the Nairobi and Rwanda processes, working alongside the East African community and the African Union and all stakeholders to promote dialogue and reconciliation. Sustainable peace in DRC is interpretable from the respect of sovereignty, territorial integrity, and the political independence of all states in the region. Kenya underscores the importance of addressing all root causes of the conflict, including enduring legacies of colonialism, impunity, and the illicit exploitation of natural resources.

Latvia jointly with the Nordic-Baltic countries remain deeply concerned about the dire humanitarian and human rights situation in Eastern DRC, including summary executions, sexual and gender-based violence, forced recruitment and killing of children, and persecution of human rights defenders. All violations must be investigated and perpetrators held fully accountable through international and domestic accountability mechanisms. Reiterating their call for M23 to withdraw from all occupied areas and for Rwanda to cease its support for M23 and withdraw its troops from the DRC, they further urge the DRC to end cooperation with FDLR and to take further steps to demobilise this group and other armed groups. Commending the ongoing peace initiatives and stressing the importance of accountability, they urge all parties to engage constructively; uphold their international obligations; protect civilians; and guarantee safe, timely, and unhindered humanitarian access.

Malawi expresses grave concern over the situation in eastern DRC, commends and welcomes all efforts that have been made by relevant regional and international organisations towards sustained peace in the eastern part of the DRC and the entire region. Malawi urges a complete end to the hostilities, as this would mark a significant path towards addressing the human rights violations that have taken place in the region.

North Macedonia remains deeply concerned by ongoing reports of serious violation and abuses of human rights and breaches of international humanitarian law in north and south Kivu including exegetical killings, torture, forced recruitment and displacement, attacks on human rights defenders, and widespread sexual and gender-based violence. North Macedonia condemns these acts in the strongest possible terms and reaffirms its support for regional and international efforts aimed at achieving a peaceful and lasting resolution to the crisis. Any durable peace must respect international law, including the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the DRC, and must include mechanisms for accountability and transitional justice. Stressing the essential role of the FFM in documenting violation, supporting victims' rights, and advancing justice, North Macedonia calls on all parties to fully cooperate with the FFM and facilitate its work without delay.

The **Russian Federation** sees a real threat to the security of the civilian population, particularly the most vulnerable groups, the elderly, women, and children. The escalation of the conflict has arisen from the actions of the M23 and has put the region of the Great Lakes on the brink of an international conflict. The only way out of the situation is a political one. There are options



available, not least in UNSC resolution 2773, which is based on regional recipes to stabilise the situation within the framework of the Luanda and Nairobi processes. Russia calls on the FFM to establish a workplan with the DRC on the basis of state interest, understanding the needs of a complex situation, and moving towards human rights in a very difficult period.

Slovenia remains alarmed by the deteriorating humanitarian and human rights situation in the eastern DRC. Reports of indiscriminate attacks, extrajudicial killings, torture, and widespread sexual and gender-based violence, particularly against women and girls, must be addressed. We condemn all violence targeting civilians and urge all parties to the conflict to immediately cease all hostilities and to fully respect international humanitarian and international human rights law. Slovenia is also very concerned by the findings showing an increase of grave violations against children in North Kivu, South Kivu, and Ituri following the escalation of conflict in early 2025. This must stop. Strengthening accountability and protection frameworks is crucial to reverse horrifying trends and safeguard children's rights.

South Africa, concerned at the unfolding human tragedy, reiterates its call for the immediate cessation of hostilities in the eastern DRC, and the implementation of recent commitments made by the parties in this regard, as well as the guarantee of access to humanitarian aid. All uninvited forces must withdraw, and all neighbouring countries must not provide support or a haven 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 the regional efforts being undertaken jointly by the EAC and SADC, together with the leadership provided by the AU in this regard. Expressing its solidarity with the DRC, South Africa reaffirms its unwavering support for its territorial integrity and sovereignty. The people of eastern DRC are yearning for peace, and we dare not fail them.

South Sudan commends the government of the DRC, regional and international partners for their efforts to restore peace and stability to the region and to improve the promotion and protection of human rights situation, including redressing rights of victims of crimes against peace and security and sexual violence. South Sudan, as a neighbouring country, remains in its steadfast position that the best way to resolve the situation in Eastern DRC is through peaceful dialogue and calls upon international actors, including the UN and AU, to continue their coordinated efforts to stabilise the region, establish humanitarian corridors to ensure delivery of humanitarian assistance and access to health care.

Switzerland is deeply concerned by the humanitarian situation in the east of the DRC, and it condemns in particular attacks on hospitals, their personnel and patients, which are specifically protected by international humanitarian law. It urges all parties to guarantee unhindered humanitarian access to care to all civilians who need it. Reports show the many cases of arbitrary detentions, forced disappearances and torture, which are particularly alarming. Restrictions on access to information and threats against journalists and civil society are unacceptable, as are cases of harassment against security services by armed groups.

Tanzania expresses solidarity with the government and people of the DRC who have been denied the right to peace and many others for far too long. In this regard, Tanzania welcomes regional and international efforts for finding durable peace. Tanzania calls on all parties to the conflict to silence the guns, engage in meaningful peace talks, and sustain peaceful efforts.



Togo stresses that only the definitive resolution of the crisis through a frank and sincere dialogue between stakeholders leading to an effective and lasting ceasefire will guarantee the protection of human rights in the concerned provinces. Togo welcomes the desire for peace expressed by these stakeholders and also the commitment of international actors, in particular the United Nations, the International Monitoring Committee or the Panel of Facilitators at African level. In closing, Togo invites everyone to bear in mind this message of the mediator of the African Union, who wishes that all statements and interactions with the stakeholders is a step towards the re-establishment of peace.

The **United Kingdom** is deeply concerned by the devastating accounts of human rights abuses and violations perpetrated by all parties to this conflict. The reported extrajudicial killings, the arbitrary detention, the sexual violence, and the forced recruitment of children are simply horrendous, as are the accounts of Rwandan Defence Forces and M23 entrenching administrative control through violence, displacing civilians, targeting civil society, and dismantling legal and civil institutions. So we urge all parties to protect human rights, to respect international humanitarian law, and to engage meaningfully with the peace processes. The UK reiterates its call on the DRC to reconsider its decision to lift the moratorium on the death penalty. The UNHRC use all the mechanisms available to it, to investigate reports of human rights violations and abuses in the eastern DRC, to identify the perpetrators, and to end impunity once.

Views Expressed by intergovernmental Organizations

UNICEF remains deeply alarmed by the deteriorating humanitarian and protection situation in the eastern provinces of the DRC, particularly in North Kivu, South Kivu, and Ituri. The intensification of armed conflict and violence continues to expose children to grave violations, including killing, maiming, recruitment by armed groups, abductions, and gender-based violence. Today, over 4 million children across the DRC require humanitarian assistance. In the east, massive displacement, insecurity, and restricted access to essential services are exacerbating already critical levels of vulnerability. UNICEF urges all parties to the conflict to fully comply with their obligations under international human rights and humanitarian law, to immediately cease all violations against children, and to facilitate safe, sustained, and unhindered humanitarian access. UNICEF further calls on national authorities and the international community to ensure that impunity for grave violations ends. Perpetrators must be held accountable to appropriate and child-sensitive justice mechanisms in line with international standards. The children of the DRC cannot wait. Their rights, safety, and dignity must be prioritised as a matter of urgency. UNICEF stands ready to support.

Views Expressed by Non-Governmental Organizations

The **European Centre for Law and Justice** argues that violence against Christians in the DRC has reached alarming levels in recent months. In February 2025, the ADF, a terrorist group affiliated with the Islamic State, massacred 70 Christians in brutal attacks that targeted places of worship. These atrocities are part of a broader campaign of terror. Between January and February of 2025, a child was sexually assaulted every 30 minutes, and over 7 million people are now internally displaced. Welcoming the resolution adopted by the European Parliament in April 2025 condemning these attacks and recognising their religious dimension, the Centre calls upon the UNHRC to act. As is often the case, violence is driven not only by ideology, but by the desire to



control strategic national resources. Armed groups exploit this chaos to enrich themselves, while Christian communities continue to bear the brunt of the violence. The Centre urges the FFM to include in its investigations the specific targeting of Christian communities, and calls on the UNHRC to acknowledge the religious character of the persecution against Christians in Eastern DRC, support international mechanisms to investigate and prosecute crimes against humanity, and ensure the protection of displaced and targeted populations.

World Vision International explains that the taking of the town of Goma and then the town of Bukavu in 2025 has given rise to much movement in population, including mass displacement of children who are exposed to sexual violence and to hunger and to forced recruitment and even to early marriages. This violence not only destroys household homes, it steals the innocence of children. It causes children to end in the hands of militia. In the DRC, it also fuels food insecurity and makes it difficult for humanitarian aid to reach those it needs to reach. World Vision calls for the condemnation of the serious violations of the rights of the child and violations of international humanitarian law; support for the work of the FFM with sufficient means to operate independently and efficiently; and unfettered humanitarian access with concrete measures for the protection of children.

Physicians for Human Rights states that health centres have been attacked and plundered by armed forces and the wounded have been arrested in hospitals and that should not happen. They are protected by international humanitarian law. Clinicians have face breaks in the provision of medicines and lack of rape kits. Furthermore, brutal cuts in humanitarian aid have given rise to difficulties in treating communicable diseases. The lack of police officers and judicial operators in certain areas deprives victims of their protection they deserve. Sexual and gender-based violence and other human rights violations must be investigated and support provided to the rapid and comprehensive collection of evidence. Efforts to negotiate peace have not given rise to accountability nor to reparation for violations committed.

RADDHO gives the floor to a witness and a victim of the ongoing conflict. An African proverb says, only people who live on both sides of a river know how deep that river is. The east today is gripped by security crisis, which is ongoing. It is unbearable. The M23 movement is operating with total impunities, sowing indescribable chaos in its path, terror, humiliation and death. RADDHO calls for the prosecution before the ICC of all perpetrators of these crimes to create an international criminal court for the Congo to punish these perpetrators and to document the Congolese massacres as tantamount to genocide. Witnesses and human rights activists needs to be protected and blood minerals contracts that only fuel this war must be suspended. The Congolese government's initiatives need support through the National Fund for Reparation for Victims.

The **International Federation of ACAT** warns against the collapse of the judiciary and the penitentiary administration in the towns of Goma and Bukavu. This situation is ongoing today and has opened the way for arbitrary detentions in unofficial places of detention under the M23, where torture is commonplace, as well as enforced disappearances and given rise to racial and judicial killings, targeting in particular civilians arrested for having spoken out against the M23. The violations of the rights of human rights defenders and lawyers and the risks of reprisals they face, already denounced by the special rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders in March, means that nothing can be done and impunity is fuelled. This impunity got worse recently



with the creation by the M23 of a structure called Arbitral Tribunal installed outside of all legal framework and made up of non-professional staff. These persons, however, are behaving as if they were magistrates and reopening cases which were already closed by official courts. The UNHRC shall take urgent measures to restore the rule of law in the east of the DRC and to support the mandate of the FFM.

The **Bureau International Catholique de l'Enfance (BICE)** expresses concern over the significant impact of the crisis on the educational system of the region. The recommendations are in favour of the prosecution of the crimes perpetrated in the DRC. The increase of violence, the scaling up of terror means that the children of Kivu and Ituri and Tanganyika, their rights, fundamental rights to food, health, education, housing and employment are violated. This situation has given rise to the uprooting of local communities away from where they usually live and the increase of the flows of IDPs and affecting in particular women, girls and the elderly. The Bureau calls upon all partners to support the cause of poor children who are defenceless, left to their own devices, victims of forced abduction and forced recruitment in armed groups.

Interfaith International gives the floor to a survivor and a victim of the atrocities in the east of the DRC speaking on behalf of the thousands of people who have suffered the same fate. Interfaith evokes the deterioration of the human rights situation in Goma and Bukavu – towns which were taken by the AFCM23 group and the Rwandan army who have sown terror by killing people and raping women. The speaker herself is a victim whose husband has been killed by these armies. The perpetrators must be brought to account before competent courts. and we are victims.

The **Centre du Commerce International pour le Développement** expresses its deep concern about the dramatic situation prevailing in the provinces of North Kivu and South Kivu with suffering inflicted upon the civilian populations, which include mass rapes, systematic torture, enforced disappearances as well as summary and extrajudicial killings. This is aggravated by the closure of the humanitarian corridors, depriving the most vulnerable populations from the aid they desperately need to survive. The region faces a forced repopulation with also severe influence by the M23 AFC on local administration. The Centre calls for the immediate cessation of hostility, the withdrawal of all foreign warring factions, the continuation of the political-diplomatic dialogue for the implementation of the Luanda Roadmap.

Liberal International is gravely concerned by the escalating war in the Eastern DRC. Since January 2025, M23 rebels, according to UN experts backed by foreign actors, have seized Goma, killing over 8,500 and displacing nearly 1 million. Violence has spread to South Kivu, marked by mass atrocities, including sexual violence and attacks on hospitals. Serious violations of international humanitarian and human rights law. Marie, a Congolese mother, survived the destruction of her village's clinic. Her husband was killed. She now shelters in a camp with her three children, struggling daily for food and safety. The NGO condemns attacks on civilians and demand accountability from all actors, including companies profiting from conflict minerals. The European Union wants a critical raw materials memorandum of understanding must centre human rights, not exploitation. Liberal International urges the UN to establish an independent investigative mechanism, impose targeted sanctions, and strengthen civilian protection mandates. Silence is complicity. Concrete action is overdue.



RIFORMAF points out that the scale of the crisis dramatically affects the daily life of the civilians. The M23 AFC violence, mass displacement and crimes against women and children, especially sexual violence, used as an arm, as a weapon of war, is a cause for serious concern and hampers any prospect of peace and justice. It undermines the confidence of the institution, makes fragile social cohesion, and deprives victims of their fundamental rights. RIFORMAF calls upon all parties in the conflict to immediately stop the hostility in respect of sovereign territory, the withdrawal of warring factions throughout the territory of the DRC.

FACTS & FIGURES ON ID PARTICIPATION

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