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ADVANCEMENT AND GLOBAL DIALOGUE

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Enhanced Interactive Dialogue on the Democratic Republic of the Congo

UNHRC Resolutions S-37/1 and 57/34

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OPENING REMARKS

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

Very few places in the world have been confronted with a crisis that is as serious and urgent as that currently faced by the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Monitoring and independent and impartial reports can contribute to precisely establishing the events taking place with a view to establishing truth, justice, and accountability. In the fog of war, propaganda, disinformation, and fear can at times distort and conceal facts. In this context, the Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) mandated by the UNHRC in February is crucial.

The FFM has established that **all parties involved** in the recent and shocking escalation of violence in the provinces of North and South Kivu have **committed serious violations and abuses** of international human rights law and serious violations of international humanitarian law. The M23 supported by the Rwanda Defence Forces (RDF) and the armed forces of the DRC, jointly with affiliated armed groups, have committed war crimes. The FFM has also concluded that the **M23 may have committed crimes against humanity**. Both **Rwanda and the DRC have**



responsibilities under international law for their support to known armed groups for having committed serious human rights abuses.

The **M23** supported by the RDF has committed widespread and systematic abuses and violations in North and South Kivu, aiming to intimidate and pressure the civilian population to build up its own ranks and impose order and security. The M23 has summarily executed civilians, especially men, suspected of collaborating with the government forces. It has killed civilians, including children, without any clear reason. In July, members of the M23, as well as persons presumed to be soldiers of the RDF, as well as civilians armed with machetes, massacred hundreds of people, mainly members of the **Hutu community**, in four villages in the Rutshuru area. This is one of the most deadly incidents recorded since the resurgence of the M23 in 2022.

During raids, which have become almost daily, the **M23 has systematically abducted and detained thousands** of people. These operations targeted presumed members of the armed forces of the DRC, as well as affiliated groups, but also their families or any person suspected of being connected to them, as well as members of civil society. OHCHR has also confirmed that **M23** committed acts of torture and ill-treatment, including sexual violence against detainees. Certain persons were beaten to death or died of their injuries of asphyxia, hunger or dehydration. According to testimonies, some of the guards were Rwandan. Thousands of civilians, including children, were subsequently sent to so-called training camps, where they were subjected to forced labour, to military servitude and other forms of torture and ill-treatment. The fate of hundreds of men, women and children who were abducted remains unknown.

OHCHR has also documented that the **armed forces of the DRC** deliberately killed civilians following clashes with the armed groups called the **Wazalendo**. OHCHR noted that the Wazalendo managed at least 13 sites where detainees were subjected to torture and ill-treatment. According to the FFM, Wazalendo groups recruited children below the age of 18 years, and in some cases below the age of 15 years, to use them as combatants, messengers, guides or as spies, and that they were holding them arbitrarily in inhumane conditions.

Sexual violence has been used as a weapon of war in the DRC. Today, this horror continues. The FFM has established that the majority of parties to the conflict commit large-scale sexual violence. Women and girls, some of whom were only 10 years old, were abducted, subjected to gang rape, reduced to sexual slavery and completely dehumanised. Some died as a consequence of these rapes. The FFM has also documented **cases of sexual violence against men**, boys and LGBT persons, even though these crimes are very rarely reported due to stigmatisation and fear.

OHCHR has further identified a **pattern of generalised sexual violence** committed by the members of the armed forces of the DRC and the Wazalendo during their withdrawal from the front lines. These crimes have left deep scars on the victims. They suffer from mental and psychological trauma, as well as physical trauma, undesired pregnancies and a risk of lifelong harm to their health, including by infertility or HIV infection.

In 2024, the High Commissioner himself met victims and survivors in the Bulengo camp for displaced persons, which allowed him to see with his own eyes to what extent sexual violence tears apart family and community links, often forcing survivors to leave their homes. Some women cannot come back from having been raped, fearing stigma. **Health services are**



underfunded and inadequate, which only exacerbates their plight. This matter requires the immediate attention of the international community.

The expansion of the M23 has left a trail of destruction in north and south Kivu. It has also had a negative impact on human rights in other parts of the country. The state security forces have been redeployed to combat the M23 and other armed groups, including the Allied Defence Forces (ADF) and the CODECO (Cooperative for the Development of Congo) have taken advantage of the security vacuum.

Between 1 June 2024 and 31 May 2025, the UN Joint Human Rights Office (the Joint Office) has counted **over 5,000 violations and abuses** of human rights and violations of international humanitarian law throughout the country. These include summary executions, acts of torture and ill-treatment, sexual violence, abductions and arbitrary arrests and detentions. The number of victims of these crimes has increased by 16% during this period compared to the same period last year. After the M23, the ADF, or the second armed group responsible for the majority of abuses with attacks concentrated in north Kivu and Ituri, in July alone, the **ADF killed over 100 civilians** in the territory of Irumu in Ituri. In August, they killed at least 52 civilians in Luberu and Beni in North Kivu.

During the period under consideration, the majority of parties to the conflict have multiplied arbitrary detests and arrests of political opponents as well as threats against human rights defenders, journalists and civil society activists. The M23 has stepped up threats against judges. Since January 2025, the Joint Office has recorded **568 requests for protection**, including 87 made by women. Even in the provinces that are not directly impacted by the armed conflict, such as Mai Ndombe and the Chopu, tensions and inter-community violence have led to murder, ill-treatment, sexual violence and massive displacement. In Kinshasa and in the Kasai province, OHCHR reports that **hate speech and ethnically-based attacks** have increased against persons presumed to be associated to the M23.

These violations are still ongoing, multiplying the plight of a population that is traumatised by decades of violence. Efforts made over the past few months to achieve peace are encouraging, but they must be made tangible in the field. A **genuine ceasefire** is urgently necessary. All the parties to the conflict must ensure that they strictly uphold international law and human rights law, as well as international humanitarian law.

Rwanda must immediately stop any support to the M23 and withdraw its armed forces from the DRC. It must conduct enquiries on allegations of violations and abuse, which are attributed to it, and hold the perpetrators accountable. The **DRC** must ensure that its forces uphold international law. It must stop any form of support to the Wazalendo or other armed groups and ensure that all suspected perpetrators of abuses and violations in DRC be brought to justice.

The High Commissioner urges states to **exert maximum pressure on Rwanda and the DRC** to ensure that they put an end to any support to armed groups known to have committed serious human rights abuses and to ensure that humanitarian assistance is delivered to all those in need and that they support the mediation process and the process for an effective peace.



A peace founded in human rights implies that the authors, the **perpetrators of horrific crimes must be held accountable**. It also implies that children traumatised by extreme violence which they witnessed must be treated and protected. It also involves recognising and integrating measures aiming to establish truth and reparations for damaged cause. It also involves a clear commitment to prevent the repetition of such atrocities.

The facts are before the eyes of the UNHRC. This knowledge must constitute a lever for change in order to ensure that the Council and the international community as a whole take action to put an end to violence, protect victims and guarantee justice. In closing, the High Commissioner urges member states to ensure adequate support to the Commission of Inquiry (COI) entrusted with bringing this essential work forward and to establish the foundations of justice for the innumerable victims of the conflict in the DRC.

STATEMENTS BY PANELLISTS

H.E. Mr. Guillaume NGEFA ATONDOKO, Minister of Justice, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)

On behalf of the Government of the DRC, the Minister of Justice expresses the desire to give a serious response to the concerns contained in high-quality report prepared by the FFM under the auspices of OHCHR and to participate in the interactive dialogue with the UNHRC. The report prepared by the FFM confirms that the ongoing conflict in the eastern part of the country is an international armed conflict with the confirmed presence of Rwandan troops. The Minister stresses it is **not an internal conflict**. The conflict is being fuelled by an external aggression led by Rwanda and which is supporting the M23 and the AFC.

H.E. Mr. Samuel Mbemba KABUYA TANDA, Minister for Human Rights, DRC

The Minister for Human Rights points out that, on the basis of the OHCHR's findings, the High Commissioner could have termed such findings as a genocide. **Mass systematic crimes** are being committed in the DRC by Rwanda and its proxies - the M23 and the AFC. There have been massacres of civilians, forced displacement, sexual violence, child conscription and attacks on civilian infrastructure in particular schools and hospitals.

The most recent dates from July 2025 when almost 300 DRC citizens were brutally massacred in the Rutshuru area. This was confirmed in reports by the UN and [Human Rights Watch](#) which was even more precise with an accurate documentation of the massacre of 140 Hutus. This sows the **seeds of ethnic cleansing** which is at the heart of genocide in line with international law. Another serious massacre occurred in Kishishe in November 2022 which was committed by the same forces using the same modus operandi. Furthermore, the government continues to monitor all human rights violations which are still being committed by the occupying forces which have established a system of government by crime.

UNHRC resolution S-37/1 condemns these violations and calls for the **immediate withdrawal of the Rwandan forces and their proxies** – the AFC and the M23 - but these demands remain a dead letter up until today. The DRC thus calls for an independent Commission of Inquiry (COI) to be fully established by nominating the investigators so that they can investigate the crimes and put an end to impunity. This will hold perpetrators accountable.



H.E. Mr. Patrick MUYAYA KATEMBWE, Minister of Communications and Media, DRC

The Minister of Communications and Media explains that the DRC armed forces are a republican forces subject to international law. They are **not linked in any way to the FDLR**, quite the opposite. The instructions to the army from the President are strict to prevent any form of collusion and disciplinary measures are taken against anyone who is suspected of collusion. The DRC reiterates its commitment to taking all the necessary measures to counteract any act against republican values, which will result in criminal proceedings.

The DRC combats any attempt to distort the picture of a battle between a legitimate armed forces which defends the country and the armed forces of neighbouring countries which commit crimes and try to exploit natural resources. There are **self-defence groups** which protect civilians from massacres caused by the resurgence of the M23, which is undermining the Nairobi process led by president Kenyatta which had started the demobilisation of all forces.

When it comes to **hate speech**, refugees or the Presidents of FDLR, all of these issues will not be overcome for as long as the Rwandan armed forces continue to support proxies in the DRC and continue to commit the crimes evoked by the Minister for Human Rights. In this context, the DRC has created the armed defence reserve in order to provide a framework for these armed forces and vets them rigorously.

While expressing its gratitude to the Team of Experts, the DRC would prefer the focus to be placed on the **effective implementation of the COI**, as the only way to break the cycle of impunity and provide justice to victims. In this far country, there is a human tragedy which cannot be ignored. The DRC calls for urgent action for truth to be established; perpetrators to be held accountable; and the dignity of victims be restored. It is only through acts and not just by words that we can lay the foundations for lasting peace.

Ms. Bintou KEITA, UNSG Special Representative in the DRC and Chief of the United Nations Mission for the Stabilisation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO)

Appreciating the Minister for Human Rights for confirming his commitment to cooperate with MONUSCO to protect human rights, uphold transitional justice and the fight against impunity, Ms. Bintou KEITA acknowledges the High Commissioner's report showing that the human rights situation continues to deteriorate, particularly affecting women, children and persons displaced by the conflicts.

Hailing the work of the FFM and of the International Team of Experts, the Special Representative urges the UNHRC to continue to support the implementation of their mandate. As part of the **Washington and Doha peace process**, she further urges all parties to respect their commitments and to strive to ensure that human rights and protection of civilians are at the heart of these initiatives. Despite the UN Security Council resolution calling for an immediate ceasefire, there continues to be confrontations. The level of human rights violations and those of international humanitarian law may undermine any efforts to curb the violence in Eastern DRC.

The UNSG Special Representative voices deep concern over the **summary executions** carried out by the M23 in the Rutshuru area. Despite progress made as part of the Arrow 2 dialogue in Ituri Province supported by MONUSCO, the security situation gets progressively worse with



resumption of hostilities and the civilian population are paying a high price for this. Over the last two months, the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) have increased their **attacks against civilians** in North Kivu and Ituri, causing the deaths of at least 200 civilians, including women and children. The Special Representative is particularly concerned by the situation of victims of sexual violence, particularly women and girls. The number of cases is increasing, whilst support for the victims is decreasing.

The **humanitarian situation** is not really improving. Over 8 million displaced persons are finding it difficult to get any humanitarian aid because of insecurity and lack of resources. At least three humanitarians have been killed since the start of this year. **Human rights abuses**, particularly more and more cases of arbitrary detention, particularly in the areas under the control of the M23 and the AFC, are extremely worrying. Civil society activists, human rights defenders and journalists are the target of unprecedented persecution. In the areas under M23 control, despite restrictions facing MONUSCO, the latter continues to host many civilians in its bases in Goma, including civil society activists and human rights defenders.

Despite the security challenges, MONUSCO continues to play a crucial role in protecting civilians in the part under the control of the Congolese state. This year, **MONUSCO has strengthened patrols** in high-risk areas and made it easier for displaced persons to get back to certain places, and it has been combating impunity. Whilst documented hate speech is decreasing since the end of 2024, MONUSCO has witnessed a worsening security situation in the east.

In order to counteract this tendency, the UN launched in May the campaign ‘Living Better Together’ in order to promote social cohesion and provide an enabling environment for peace initiatives. The UN financial strain has significantly undermined the ability to fulfil MONUSCO’s human rights mandate. It has led to reduced field deployments, disrupted technical assistance in critical areas such as transitional justice and the fight against impunity, including forensic expertise, and limited support to national institutions. This **financial strain threatens to reverse hard-won progress** in human rights protection, accountability and democratic governance.

Ms. Marie-Thérèse KEITA-BOCOUM, Chair, International Team of Experts on the DRC

In the discharge of the mandate conferred by UNHRC resolution 57/34, the International Team of Experts conducted three country visits thanks to the continuing and open cooperation with Congolese authorities. As part of their mandate, the Team of Experts has seen the M23 extending its presence in the North and South Kivu provinces, as well as that of the Rwandan Defence Forces and the AFC, which is compounding the armed conflict. This worrying situation comes as **MONUSCO starts to downsize** and the financial situation of the UN Secretariat remains difficult, and this had an impact on the Team’s mandate.

When it comes to **combating impunity**, efforts have been made despite the crisis in the east of the country. 2,500 judges have been recruited, and they are the second wave of the 5,000 to be recruited. This has been ongoing for the past three years. When it comes to the crisis in the east, the Experts particularly deplore **threats** against those working in the justice sector, human rights defenders, victims and witnesses of serious crimes, journalists and traditional leaders.



Seriously worried about the worsening humanitarian situation, the Team of Experts urges all parties of conflict to respect human rights, international humanitarian law and take all possible measures to protect civilians, particularly women and children. With this in mind, the Team further urges the Government to improve protection measures for judicial officials and other persons affected by the crisis, and also calls upon the UN Security Council to **strengthen the mandate of MONUSCO** to improve its capacity to support the Government in its efforts to bring security to the country.

The Team of Experts remains concerned about the lack of progress in judicial proceedings, particularly the emblematic courses in the crisis linked to the Kamwina Militia in central Kasai. The Experts are worried that **feet dragging in the justice sector**, along with the challenges faced by the Provincial Commission for Truth, Justice and Reconciliation, will have an impact on reconciliation lasting peace. Welcoming the progress achieved in forensic medical expertise with the delivery of a complete programme for higher education studies in this area and a residence programme for forensic doctors, the Experts call upon the authorities to establish forensic medical courses in Congolese universities.

Turning to **traditional justice**, some progress has been made at provisional and national levels, including regional initiatives. When it comes to the provinces, the setting-up of the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Provincial Committee in central Kasai is continuing as we move towards hearings, and the Experts encourage the Government to support them with the necessary staff and funds. At national level, certain important legal documents concerning transitional justice have been filed, notably the national policy and certain bills on the organisation. The Government and the Parliament are encouraged to finalise these different texts so that transitional justice can get up and running. National consultations shall be held to better take into account the concerns of civilians at regional level.

While welcoming **progress achieved in the peace process** linked to the east, there is a lack of accountability and references to the rights, truth, justice, reparations, guarantees of non-repetition. The Team of Experts urges everyone to include transitional justice in peace negotiations and focus on the participation of civil society organisations, women's organisations, and it also encourages cross-border judicial cooperation. There are a number of **challenges facing transitional justice**. There has to be strategic communication around this process, appropriate funding, and there needs to be national coordination mechanisms and the intervention of international partners in the area of transitional justice.

Without a shadow of doubt, progress has been made in transitional justice, but a lot still needs to be done, notably when it comes to combating impunity and searching for truth and ensuring that there is no repetition, including at the sub-regional level. The Experts believe this is the only way of holding internal and external perpetrators of serious crimes accountable and providing victims with justice.

In closing, the Independent Team of Experts urges the United Nations, particularly the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), to contribute to the Congolese government's efforts for peace, reconciliation, and development.



Mr. Dismas KITENGE SENG, Human Rights Defender from the DRC, President and Co-Founder of the Lotus Group

Mr. Dismas KITENGE SENG is a human rights defender coming from one of the provinces which has been affected by atrocities in the past, namely the town of Kisangani. He is also a witness and a frontline actor in the field of human rights in which he has been for over 30 years. The DRC is going through one of the most serious moments in its history following the aggression by Rwanda and the protracted and complex armed conflict in the eastern part of the country and the serious human rights abuses and violence perpetrated against civilians. Despite glimmers of hope with the Washington Peace Agreement and the negotiations in Doha, **civilians continue to face all forms of violence** whilst noticing that hostilities could resume at any moment.

Following the fall of Goma and Bukavu into the hands of the rebels, the **security, humanitarian, human rights situation has grown worse**. There is targeted violence against young people, particularly forced conscription against young girls and women. They face all forms of sexual violence and targets also include humanitarians, politicians, state officials, human rights defenders, journalists, workers for international organisations and specific communities who are threatened, attacked and sometimes killed. Attacks against civilian buildings and murders against non-combatants are numerous and all these violence against civilians could be likened to international war crimes.

The DRC armed forces and the Wazalendo self-defence forces may have committed **atrocities** and they are **not taking enough precaution to protect civilians** from hostilities such as attacks, bombings, and internal fighting - which means that they have not clearly distinguished between combatants and non-combatants. Furthermore, they have not refrained from committing different forms of sexual violence, torture, as well as cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment. They do not respect the rights of prisoners of war. They do not provide fair trials to soldiers who are charged in war councils and they do not allow any sort of dissent despite legal progress in the area of human rights. Intelligence officers, police forces and the Congolese justice system continue to abuse the shrinking civic space. Civil society witnessed an escalation in the number of arrests and illegal detention in recent months, coupled with a lack of access to custody facilities and a revival of the death penalty, which is a particularly worrying development.

Combating impunity and serious human rights violations should be the priority of all international bodies, particularly the UNHRC. The hopes of victims and witnesses of the atrocities have been reignited by the establishment of a special Fund and an Inter-Institutional Commission for providing support to victims. These initiatives should be supported as they should also accompany the establishment of all the pillars of transitional justice and legal reform in order to ensure true rule of law in the DRC. The various Peace Agreements should also take justice into account because the voices and rights of victims must be heard and respected. There is no peace without justice, and without justice, there is no lasting peace.

The Congolese civil society supports the conclusions of the report prepared by the FFM and believes it is absolutely vital and useful to extend this initiative to other provinces affected by the conflict including Ituri and Tshopo. The international community shall **not give up on human rights** in the DRC - quite the opposite, it must strengthen them. For this to happen, it must provide



effective and lasting support to OHCHR's country office and the Congolese Government. Calling on the UNHRC to combat impunity and document international crimes, the Congolese civil society requests the DRC to step up efforts to support the work of the COI.

REPLIES AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

Mr. Dismas KITENGE SENG, Human Rights Defender from the DRC, believes that multiply specific bodies to address **hate speech** should not be multiplied. Existing bodies already have this competence. The issue is merely to activate them properly and implement them. Turning to the FFM, it has carried out a remarkable work in little time. This establishment of facts should be accompanied by a prompt activation of the implementation of the FFM findings. On **accountability**, the responsibility lies within the government of the DRC and even the rebel authorities, as well as the international community, to find the means necessary to fight impunity. This should be done by establishing a national and international mechanism which could address these crimes. The international community must denounce these severe crimes of war crimes, crimes against humanity, and even crimes of genocide committed with impunity in the DRC. Drawing to a close, there is no upholding human rights without the **protection of HRDs**. Similarly, there is no democracy without protecting civil society actors and respecting the political opposition in order to allow for a society which should be democratic and which upholds international human rights law.

Mr. Bessolé René BAGORO, Member of the International Team of Experts on the DRC, welcomes the efforts of the international community in supporting the DRC - efforts that must be pursued. It is important to should uphold the **establishment of transitional justice** in the peace negotiations by emphasising the participation of civil society organisations, including women's organisations. It is equally crucial to support the **integration of human rights** in the Washington and Doha agreements. The **resources** of the UN Joint Office in the DRC should be strengthened to allow it to better pursue its monitoring work and protection work of human rights. Finally, the Team of Experts asks the international community to provide OHCHR with the means necessary to allow it to effectively implement the FFM on the human rights situation in connection with the current conflict in the east of the DRC.

Ms. Bintou Keita, Chief of MONUSCO, draws the Council's attention to some fundamental **elements to ensure justice prevails** in the DRC. Firstly, as already evoked, the sexual violence related and humanitarian consequences. In areas affected, the resources needed for holistic support must be available. Secondly, it is important that the human rights issues be integrated into the ongoing peace process and in the implementation phase. Finally, the resources must be available so as to ensure that the independent **COI can be operationalised** to provide support to improve the system to fight impunity, and that there is sufficient technical assistance to implement UPR recommendations supported by the DRC.

H.E. Mr. Guillaume NGEFA ATONDOKO, Minister of Justice of the DRC, shares the concern raised by several delegations over the implementation of the recommendations contained in the FFM's report. Given the current liquidity crisis affecting the UN, the DRC calls on the Council to rationalise the mandates relating to the DRC and to earmark sufficient resources for the COI to be established. A realistic option would be to have within MINUSCO a basket of funds which



could be earmarked for various purposes, as was the case for Mali. The government of the DRC reiterates its commitment to facilitate the work of this Commission and continues to implement reforms in terms of justice, including transitional justice, to put an end to impunity and to provide for reparations to victims. Finally, the DRC continues its advocacy for an international recognition of a **genocost** - this is the genocide committed in the DRC.

H.E. Mr. Samuel Mbemba KABUYA TANDA, Minister for Human Rights of the DRC, reaffirms his government's commitment to **do its utmost** to promote and protect the fundamental rights, in particular, the rights of human rights defenders, journalists, women, children, and Indigenous peoples throughout the entire territory of the DRC, including the implementation of transitional justice within **FORANEV**, the National Fund for Reparations for Victims of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence. **Rwanda's denial** of the apparent truth is an insult to the memory of the victims at a time when all of the reports point to it as the aggressor.

H.E. Mr. Patrick MUYAYA KATEMBWE, Minister of Communications of the DRC, stresses that all reports confirm the presence of Rwanda in the east of the DRC. The difficulty which emerged also in Doha is that Rwanda is not disposed to move towards peace. The reality illustrates the intent of Rwanda through the **M23 brigades to establish a parallel government**. This is why the DRC government has declared null and void any such acts which might be adopted. The east of the DRC remains engaged in the role which is its own, which is that to build up a peaceful country in the middle of Africa, which can communicate and trade with countries peacefully. The DRC government is committed to ensuring the protection of civil society and the promotion of freedoms. The DRC believes that in a country with **450 different ethnic groups**, hate speech is an issue that would not arise if it were not for the **voluntary stigmatisation** engaged in Rwanda with a deliberate intent to create chaos and find a justification to massacre communities under the pretext of protecting another.

High Commissioner Volker TÜRK considers it of utmost importance that the **ongoing peace process** not only brings an end to the fighting, to the grave violations, but also to the very precarious situation in the east which has been lasting for decades. Having himself visited the east several times in various professional capacities, the High Commissioner feels profound sympathy with the victims and with the people who are not only displaced, but who need the hope for stability in that part of the country.

Human rights need to be an integral part of the ongoing peace process. One should not forget that **human rights are confidence-building measures** that need to be developed with creativity. Much more shall be explored on how human rights can be part of the solution in this very precarious situation. It is equally important to integrate transitional justice and accountability in peace negotiations and in all the agreements that are being crafted with the relevant parties. First and foremost, a **victim-centred approach** is required – one that is non-discriminatory and that ensures access to justice, including for minority groups. Given the widespread use of conflict-related sexual violence, it is absolutely critical that the victims of sexual violence, most notably children, are provided not only with sustained support, but also with assistance on all fronts.

The international community must **accompany this process**, and this does not only mean technical support and financial assistance, but also an active accompaniment during the peace



process, accountability measures, and transitional justice, among others. It also means more technical support to accompany the implementation of measures that guarantee the respect and the promotion of human rights and address the many and the massive humanitarian challenges. All those who have influence over the parties **must exercise such influence** to bring to an end to the fighting and use their leverage for peace and justice in the country.

In order to build lasting peace, part of the confidence-building measures need to address comprehensively on all fronts **hate speech that amounts to violence**. For peace in the region relies on a strong commitment of all actors towards social cohesion and peaceful coexistence. Echoing Ms. Bintou Keita, the High Commissioner stresses the need to operationalize the COI. Regrettably, OHCHR is facing an extremely serious UN budgetary situation, but we need to find ways and means to ensure that the COI receives the support it requires. Hopefully, OHCHR will find the states to provide the funds necessary.

In the meantime, OHCHR will continue **receiving and preserving information** on alleged human rights violations and abuses and the violations of international humanitarian law committed in South and North Kivu provinces. The High Commissioner takes the opportunity to launch an appeal to states to maintain their strong support for OHCHR's Joint Office on the ground, because the complexity and the depth of human rights challenges in the country will require sustained funding and support.

He further calls on everyone to take a very close look at the **economic dimension of the conflict** in the east. There are clearly strong economic interests. But responsibilities come along with economic interests. People should not suffer as a result of this decade-long **economic exploitation**. Finally, the High Commissioner pays tribute to the victims, human rights defenders, and civil society members in the conflict-affected areas of the DRC for their courage, for their resilience, and for their **relentless struggle for peace**, thereby calling upon the Human Rights Council to make sure that they are all at the centre of our attention.

VIEWS EXPRESSED BY THE STATE CONCERNED

The delegation of **Rwanda** rejects claims that it directs or controls M23 or any other armed group. Under international law, attribution requires concrete, reviewable proof. The report itself cites access constraints and heavy reliance on remote, open-source material with no access of data. Such grave allegations must be backed by verifiable evidence. A simple word count of the FFM report reveals an interesting picture. The M23 appears 110 times in the report. Rwanda/RDF appears 65 times. The FRDC, 42 times. The Wazalendo, 43 times. The FDLR, only 15. Finally, generic armed groups, 23 times. This imbalance shapes a precooked narrative and skews the reality on the ground. It overlooks roughly 260 armed groups that operate actively in eastern DRC, in addition of armed foreign involvement alongside the FRDC, including private military contractors, mercenaries and bilateral military forces. This fits a pattern of **politicised reporting that vilifies Rwanda without evidence**.

Rwanda is a UN member state that contributes to peace and stability. Rwanda does not accept being continuously subjected to baseless accusation. Rigorous evidence is non-negotiable and any breach of that standard will be challenged every single time. Rwanda also **rejects any involvement** in the events reported in Rutshuru in July 2025. Even the report acknowledges



shortcomings in verification. Phone records and satellite images alone are not enough, especially when victims are tied to ethnical labels in ways that can inflame tensions. Meanwhile, the reports **minimise the verified hate speech and identity-based attacks** against the Congolese Tutsi communities that continue, particularly around Minembwe in South Kivu. The pattern is clear and urgent. Rwanda requests the UNHRC to treat this as an **early warning priority** and act now and stresses that context matters.

The DRC has repeatedly committed to neutralising the FDLR. Through the Washington Peace Agreement, the African Union, Nairobi and Rwanda process, relevant Security Council tracks and the **MONUSCO mandates**. Instead, the DRC-backed FDLR have been equipped, enabled and give space to recruit, spread genocidal ideology in the Eastern DRC. Tuning to MONUSCO, 25 years have passed. Billions have been spent. Civilians are still not protected, with the DRC-backed FDLR being provided more arms and actively recruiting. The UN's costliest mission cannot be measured by reports. Renewing mandates without review to apply effective change clearly repeats failure.

The delegation of Rwanda concludes its statements by formulating **three requests**. First, it urges the Council to pause new mandates and launch a UN-aligned review to streamline overlapping mechanisms under items 2 and 10, and redirect resources to what would be most effective for civilians. Second, Rwanda requests the adoption and publication of one evidentiary standard for all. Concerned states shall be given timely prior notice of reports so that they can engage before any public condemnation. Condemnation without engagement is counterproductive. Third, the delegation calls on the UNHRC to reject all recommendations addressed to Rwanda. In closing, Rwanda reiterates that accountability must be based on objective verified results instead of selective reporting that prejudices member states such as Rwanda.

INTERACTIVE DIALOGUE

Views Expressed by State Delegations

Algeria is deeply disturbed by the security and humanitarian situation in eastern DRC. Regretting that the Peace Agreement has not yet produced the desired results, and that the Congolese people continue to pay a high price for instability and violence in eastern DRC, Algeria reiterates its firm conviction that a political solution is the only way to bring about lasting peace in the DRC and the whole region. It has to be a solution which would take stock of the legitimate security concerns of neighbours and addresses the deep-seated causes of the conflict. Algeria welcomes regional international efforts, particularly the central role being played by the African Union, sub-regional mechanisms in finding a lasting solution to the conflict, under the leadership of the President of the Republic of the Congo. Algeria reiterates its solidarity with the Congolese people, and remains committed to the unity and independence and territorial sovereignty of the DRC.

Australia regrets that the COI could not be operationalised due to the liquidity crisis and notes the FFM's findings that all parties to the conflict have committed serious human rights abuses and violations. Australia calls on the DRC and Rwanda to thoroughly investigate possible crimes under international law. The increased attacks in North Kivu by the M23 and other armed groups, despite the 27 June Peace Agreement and the 19 July Declaration of Principles are appalling. The reports of unlawful killing of civilians, arbitrary detention and use of sexual violence as a weapon



of war are deeply concerning. The worsening humanitarian crisis is alarming and cannot be ignored. Australia reiterates its calls for de-escalation and accountability for any violations and abuses of international law. It also reiterates its call for Rwanda to cease its support to the M23 and to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the DRC. Australia encourages all parties to uphold their obligations under international law to ensure the protection of civilians, including humanitarian personnel, allow unimpeded access to aid and ensure a permanent end to the conflict.

Belgium deplores and firmly condemns the violations and abuses of human rights committed by all parties to the conflict, as well as the repeated attacks against civilians as recently in Rutshuru. Belgium is particularly alarmed by the reemergence of sexual violence and gender-based violence, in particular gang rapes and the recruitment and use of children. Violence targeting civil society with impunity must be ended. While diplomatic advances are encouraging, an effective ceasefire must be upheld in the field, and the protection of civilians must be at the core of negotiations. The FFM and the COI, which Belgium would like to see established, play an essential role in collecting and analysing evidence of presumed violations, which may constitute war crimes and crimes against humanity. Belgium urges all parties, in particular the M23 and the Rwandan army, to fully cooperate with the independent mechanisms. Further expressing concern at the increasing impediments against civic and democratic space in the rest of the country, Belgium calls on the government to strengthen their efforts in terms of transitional justice and to fight impunity and hate speech.

Burundi is pleased to have facilitated access for the FFM to sites hosting Congolese refugees that came following the occupation by the M23, militarily supported by Rwanda of North and South Kivu in the DRC, and Rwanda's role has been confirmed. Thousands of women and children have faced atrocities. It is the worst possible atrocity that humans can inflict on each other. For a long time, Burundi has been asking the Council to reveal the reality of Rwanda's support for armed terrorist groups which spread terror and kill people in the Great Lakes region. The FFM's findings suggest that there have been human rights violations, serious violations of international humanitarian law in North and South Kivu in the first seven months of this year by the M23 involving Rwanda. As these are war crimes and crimes against humanity, the international community must face up to its responsibilities and call for justice to be provided. This is not just a moral duty. It is an obligation. There must be appropriate funding in order for the COI to be established and to fully discharge its mandate.

Cameroon hails the constant efforts made by the Congolese authorities to deal with a very complex security and humanitarian situation, in particular in eastern provinces of the country. Cameroon stands in solidarity with the people and the government of the DRC, and reiterates its support for their commitment to restoring peace, promoting the rule of law, and consolidating national institutions. Cameroon welcomes progress achieved in a number of areas, particularly in combating impunity, transitional justice, security sector reform, as well as support for national human rights protection mechanisms. It encourages the Congolese authorities to pursue these efforts in a spirit of inclusivity and institutional resilience. In this regard, Cameroon underscores the importance of constructive support from the Council and its mechanisms. Technical assistance, national capacity building, as well as enhanced humanitarian and logistic support are absolutely vital to address the current challenges and to promote sustainable responses.



While acknowledging the role of the OHCHR Joint Office in the DRC, the international community shall deploy enhanced efforts to support affected civilians, particularly women, children, and displaced persons. The connection between development, peace, and human rights should foster collective action on the ground. Cameroon encourages all stakeholders to support this positive trend in full respect of the DRC's sovereignty.

China notes with concern the ongoing violence and conflict in eastern DRC and the rising casualties. Reiterating its support to the government in safeguarding its independence and territorial integrity, China calls on all the armed factions in eastern DRC to abide by the obligations of international law, halt violence, and take part in the demobilisation process and protect the life and property of civilians. Further welcoming the positive momentum recently generated between the DRC and Rwanda, China calls on both countries to honour their commitment and obligations and jointly work towards a political solution of the conflict. China also appeals to all parties to abide by the international law, protect basic human rights, and put an end to hostilities. China fully supports the UN and regional mechanisms in playing a greater role in seeking a comprehensive and lasting peace plan. The discussions and actions taken at the UNHRC should reflect international solidarity and create conditions for a political solution. In this spirit, China is ready to work with the international community to continue to play a positive role to defuse tension and seek a lasting and comprehensive peace.

Egypt reiterates its condemnation of all acts of violence which undermine peace and stability. Firmly committed to the unity and territorial sovereignty of the DRC, Egypt welcomes the Peace Agreement between Rwanda and the DRC, as well as the Declaration of Principles signed between the DRC and the M23. There are important steps towards restoring peace, building trust, particularly in the Great Lakes region. It is also important to fully implement these agreements. Egypt encourages all parties to pursue their efforts to rebuild peace and stability, to protect civilians and to strengthen transitional justice mechanisms. It further urges the DRC to properly support its institutions to overcome challenges and create an enabling environment for stability. In conclusion, Egypt stresses the Council's role in supporting states in line with their requirements. This will help them in their efforts to protect human rights.

Equatorial Guinea stands in solidarity with the people and government of the DRC and expresses concern over the humanitarian and security situation in the eastern part of the country. A stop must be put to the violations being committed by M23 supported by foreign forces. It is the civilians who are paying a high price for this. Equatorial Guinea calls upon the Council to ensure that international law is respected and the appropriate mechanisms must be established for accountability to be ensured for these violations. It calls upon African institutions to be given a central role in helping restore peace in the DRC.

Ethiopia stands in solidarity with the DRC, who continue to endure immense suffering due to armed conflict and instability. As a country with a longstanding commitment to regional peace and multilateral cooperation, Ethiopia views the situation in the DRC as a shared regional responsibility. Ethiopia strongly supports the role of the African Union and calls for the continued coordination among regional actors in advancing inclusive political dialogue and protecting the rights and dignity of civilians. Ethiopia reaffirms its longstanding conviction that the crisis in the DRC cannot be resolved through military means. Achieving sustainable peace requires inclusive



national dialogue and effective regional cooperation. In this regard, Ethiopia underscores the importance of strengthening support for the and Nairobi process, essential frameworks for fostering political solutions. Ethiopia further urges all stakeholders to uphold the principles of sovereignty, noninterference, and peaceful coexistence. In addition, it calls for scaled-up international support to help the DRC address the root causes of the conflict and respond effectively to humanitarian needs, particularly for displaced population, women, and children. In conclusion, Ethiopia fully supports regional and international efforts aimed at restoring peace and addressing humanitarian needs in the DRC.

France calls on all stakeholders to deploy all possible efforts to put an end to the humanitarian disaster underway in the DRC; allow access to vulnerable populations; and ensure the protection of humanitarian workers. Violence against civilians, including the forced recruitment of children and violence against human rights defenders must end, as must all support brought to groups committing such violence. France condemns the persistent impediments against the implementation of the Moscow mandate and the continued offensive of M23 in the east, conducted with the support of Rwanda, which has catastrophic security and humanitarian consequences. France calls for an immediate end to the combats and the ceasefire. Stressing that the documentation of violations remains a priority to fight impunity, France further calls on the government to continue its efforts to fight impunity and to withdraw its decision to lift the moratorium on the execution of the death penalty. In closing, it draws the Council's attention to the importance of objective work on the nature and prevalence of hate speech in the Great Lakes region.

Germany condemns in the strongest terms the reported ongoing international humanitarian law violations, including deliberate, arbitrary and summary killings, massacres against civilians, and the systematic use of sexual and gender-based violence as a weapon of war. It further condemns the ongoing military activities and occupation of vast territories of eastern DRC by the M23 with the support of the Rwandan Defence Forces. Germany denounces the human rights violations by the Congolese Armed Forces and Wazalendo militia and the incitement to hate speech by various parties. These violations deepen the unbearable suffering of civilians and undermine the peace and mediation efforts by the African Union, the US and Qatar. To help end the entrenched impunity that has been a plague for the people of the DRC for far too long, Germany calls for the swift establishment of the COI. To this end, it calls on all UN member states to ensure their mandatory contributions to the UN budget on time.

Ghana remains concerned about the fragile security situation in the eastern DRC and its devastating impact on human rights. Ghana firmly condemns the continued act of violence perpetrated by armed groups, which cause immense suffering to innocent civilians. Ghana emphasises the need for the full and good faith implementation of the recent Peace Agreement between the DRC and Rwanda, with the ultimate objective of securing lasting peace and reconciliation. While acknowledging the effort of the Congolese authorities to address conflict-related sexual violence, Ghana remains concerned that survivors and their families face serious barriers in accessing justice and accountability. It urges sustained justice sector reforms, strengthened human rights efforts and genuine regional cooperation to ensure a responsible and durable transition towards peace and stability.



Ireland remains concerned by the conflict in the eastern DRC and reported violations of international humanitarian law, including widespread sexual and gender-based violence and the targeting of civilians by armed actors. The human rights situation has further deteriorated since the renewed offensive of M23, supported by the Rwandan Defence Force. Ireland calls on all parties to fulfil their obligations in respect of civilian populations. Welcoming the progress made in the discussions facilitated by the United States and Qatar that build on the ongoing efforts of the African Union, Ireland calls on all parties to respect the ceasefire agreements and engage in the processes to attain sustainable peace, justice and security. While positively noting some progress towards tackling impunity, Ireland urges the DRC to investigate all reported human rights violations and abuses by members of the security forces and armed militias and ensure accountability for victims. In closing, Ireland notes with concern the increase in death sentences since the lifting of the moratorium on the death penalty. Ireland continues to urge the reversal of this decision.

Italy remains deeply concerned for the escalation of the conflict in the eastern provinces of the DRC. Since early 2025, the human rights situation has sharply deteriorated, with reports of extrajudicial killings, sexual and gender-based violence, child soldier recruitment, attacks toward religious sites, and ethnically motivated attacks. All acts of violence against civilians, especially women and children, are unacceptable and must stop. Italy welcomes the signing of the Peace Agreement by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the DRC and Rwanda in Washington last June, aiming to end the ongoing conflict in eastern DRC. After the Declaration of Principles signed in Doha in July 2025 by the DRC and the M23 rebel group to end fighting, Italy is confident that the Qatar-led ongoing efforts to rebuild trust will contribute to restore peace in eastern DRC. Italy reiterates its commitment to ensuring accountability for all those responsible for human rights violations and to promoting peace and justice.

Japan consider it as highly important to ensure accountability for the human rights violations and abuse and violations of international humanitarian law. Japan welcomes the significant progress made in the past few months, notably the signing of a Peace Agreement between the DRC and Rwanda and the signing of the Declaration of Principle between the Government of DRC and the AFC/M23, in the hope that the Peace Agreement will be implemented steadily, leading to peace, stability, and development throughout the region. In the meanwhile, Japan remains deeply concerned by the devastating human rights situation in eastern DRC due to the escalation of fighting and violence, which has forced hundreds of thousands to flee their homes over the years. Japan calls for all parties to the conflict to commit to an immediate end to the violence, particularly mass killing and sexual violence, and to respect international human rights law and international humanitarian law. In closing, Japan reaffirms its continued support for all efforts to prevent any further escalation and remains committed to working with the international community to advance human rights, peace and security in the DRC.

Kenya is deeply concerned by the widespread employee violations documented in the report, including the ongoing humanitarian and human rights crisis, which continues to have a spillover effect in the region. The protracted insecurity fuelled by armed groups and external influences continues to exert devastating toll on civilians, including mass displacement, sexual and gender-based violence, recruitment of children and attacks against humanitarian and civilian infrastructure. Kenya welcomes all global and regional initiatives, including the Nairobi and



Rwanda process, which signals a positive commitment towards resolving the conflict through dialogue. Affirming that sustainable peace in DRC is inseparable from respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence for all states in the region, Kenya underscores the importance of addressing the root causes of conflicts, including the enduring legacies of colonialism, impunity and the illicit exploitation of natural resources. Stressing that accountability for violations must be pursued in a manner that fosters regional cooperation, mutual respect and trust among all neighbouring countries, Kenya affirms its commitment to working together for peace, justice and human rights in DRC and the Great Lake region.

Malawi expresses profound concern over the human rights and humanitarian situation in eastern DRC, which has resulted in significant loss of life and forced displacement of civilians, especially women and children. Malawi commends and welcomes the sustained efforts undertaken by relevant regional and international organisations in pursuit of lasting peace in the eastern DRC and the broader Great Lakes region. In particular, it acknowledges the work of the African Union (AU), the East African Community (EAC), the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and other multilateral partners in their peacebuilding initiatives. Malawi urgently calls for the complete cessation of all hostilities, as this represents the most crucial step towards addressing the widespread human rights violations that continue to plague the region. The protection of civilians must remain a collective priority. To conclude, Malawi reaffirms its unwavering solidarity for the people of the DRC in the legitimate pursuit for peace and national development, and urges the international community to stand with the DRC.

The **Netherlands** is shocked by the findings of the FFM report documenting severe human rights violations committed by all parties to the conflict. It also voices deeply concern over the persistent lack of accountability for human rights violations, in particular for conflict-related sexual violence. The international community must remain united in ensuring accountability for victims and survivors. This must be embedded in ongoing peace negotiations. The renewed investigation by the ICC and its efforts to support domestic accountability institutions also plays a crucial role in this regard. Urging UNHRC members to support accountability efforts, including financially, the Netherlands calls on all UN member states to ensure that OHCHR is sufficiently funded to implement UNHRC-mandated activities, including those pertaining to the DRC.

North Macedonia is deeply concerned by the widespread violations of international human rights and humanitarian law committed by all parties to the conflict. Reports of summary executions, torture, forced recruitment of children, sexual and gender-based violence on a massive scale, and a deliberate targeting and displacement of civilians are gravely alarming. These acts may constitute war crimes and crimes against humanity. Recalling that both the DRC and Rwanda bear obligations under international law, North Macedonia urges both governments to end any support to armed groups, ensure full respect for international humanitarian law, and take immediate measures to protect civilians, especially women and children. Accountability must be central to any peace process. Impunity only fuels cycles of violence. Therefore, North Macedonia supports the prompt operationalisation of the UNHRC-mandated COI alongside strengthened support for victims, including access to justice and reparations. Sustainable peace will not be achieved without truth, justice, and guarantees of non-repetition.



The **Russian Federation** regrets that the escalation of the conflict in eastern DRC from the beginning of this year has pushed the region of the Great Lakes to the brink of an interstate armed conflict and led to further deterioration of the humanitarian situation. The number of refugees from the eastern DRC into neighbouring countries has exceeded one million people. IDPs are five million, around 30 million need urgent food and medical aid. Russia decisively condemns the attacks and murders by armed groups against civilians in the east. Violence against civilians is unacceptable. As the parties to the conflict trade accusations of human rights violations, the rights and freedoms of civilians continue to be systematically violated. Improvement can only come through the stabilisation of the situation in the conflict-affected eastern provinces of the country. Having consistently advocated for a political settlement of the crisis, Russia welcomes the signing by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the DRC and Rwanda of a Peace Agreement between the two countries. Another important step is the signing by the Government and the M23 rebels of a Declaration of Principles relating to a ceasefire. In Russia's view, all these measures aiming to allow millions of people to resume a normal life are in line with the core interests of the peoples of all the regions and states of Central Africa.

Slovenia condemns in the strongest terms the recent widespread of horrific violence in eastern DRC, as documented by the FFM reports, by all parties to the conflict, including acts which may constitute war crimes and crimes against humanity. Slovenia expresses dismay at the brutality of assaults, summary executions, wilful killings, abductions, sexual and gender-based violence, and the recruitment and use of children in armed conflict. All actors must immediately put an end to atrocities and fully respect their obligations under international humanitarian and international human rights law. Sustainable and lasting peace in the DRC can only be achieved through genuine dialogue, inclusivity, and the political will of all actors. Slovenia calls on all parties to the Peace Agreement and the Declaration of Principles to demonstrate genuine commitments towards reaching stability. Accountability for grave violations is central to the rule of law and to ensuring guarantees of non-repetition. The COI must be fully operational promptly.

South Africa shares the concerns about the gravity and widespread nature of the flagrant violations and abuses of international law taking place in the eastern DRC, including acts that may constitute war crimes and crimes against humanity, as well as the importance of accountability in this regard. South Africa concurs with the FFM's recommendation on the need for the prompt establishment of the COI, together with its call to secure the necessary financial resources in this regard. Given the unfolding human tragedy, there can be no military solution to the conflict, and as such, South Africa reiterates the need for the immediate cessation of hostilities. Accordingly, it welcomes the outcome of the recent joint summit of the EAC and the SADC to consolidate regional and continental efforts, including the merger of mediation structures into a unified AU-led process. Similarly, South Africa acknowledges international mediation efforts but emphasise that a sustainable solution must be African-led and inclusive of all local actors. South Africa wishes to express its solidarity with the DRC and reaffirms that its support for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the DRC remains unwavering. To conclude, South Africa reaffirms it will continue to contribute with military personnel and equipment to MONUSCO. The people of eastern DRC are yearning for peace, and we dare not fail them.

Spain is deeply disturbed at the alarming deterioration of the humanitarian situation in the east of the country, and condemns the recent M23 massacres in North Kivu and Ituri. It further



condemns all human rights violations committed by all parties to the conflict, including widespread sexual violence, child conscription, and summary executions. Voicing concern at shrinking civic space, Spain calls on the DRC to provide a safe and enabling environment for journalists and human rights defenders. Spain stands in defence for the territorial sovereignty of the DRC and the whole region; calls for the Declaration of Principles and the Peace Agreement to be implemented; and looks forward to transitional justice focussing on the victims and accountability to bring about lasting peace.

Sudan has been closely monitoring the situation in the DRC and expresses its solidarity with the victims and their family members. Sudan is worried about the situation in eastern DRC, which is vital for the stability of the whole region. Urging the restoration of peace and guarantees of non-repetition, Sudan recalls the principle of African solutions to African problems and calls for signed Peace Agreements to be implemented and support for the DRC, along with backing efforts to ensure peaceful coexistence. International efforts must be made to support vulnerable groups, notably children. Humanitarian aid is absolutely vital. The cooperation between DRC and international mechanisms is welcomed as well as legal institutional reform.

Sweden jointly with the Nordic-Baltic countries welcome the recent signing of the Peace Agreement between the DRC and Rwanda in Washington, the ongoing Doha process and the African mediation initiative. They call on all parties to stand by their commitments, respect the ceasefire and put an end to violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law, including conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence. The deteriorating humanitarian and security situation is a major concern. The Nordic-Baltic countries condemn the continued attacks on civilians by the M23 and other armed groups in eastern DRC. Accountability and the rule of law must prevail. In this respect, the report of the FFM is crucial as much as the swift operationalisation of the COI. The Nordic-Baltic countries are closely monitoring the developments in the appeal trial of the murders of UN experts Zaida Catalan and Michael Sharp in central Kasai back in 2017, including the investigation into the disappearance of their four Congolese companions. This judicial process remains vital and enjoys the full support of the Nordic-Baltic countries.

Switzerland is deeply alarmed at the situation in the DRC. Hostilities between AFC/M23 supported by Rwanda, the Congolese armed forces, the Wazalendo and other armed groups such as the ADF and FDLR are causing serious violations of international human rights and humanitarian law. Condemning such violations, attacks against civilians, particularly in North and South Kivu and Ituri, Switzerland calls upon all parties to conflict to strictly abide by international humanitarian and human rights law as well as the ceasefire signed in Doha. Switzerland is particularly concerned at the alarming scope of conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence which is strategically used to spread terror and displace communities. The use of such violence must be stigmatized. Switzerland further voices concern over the repression of human rights defenders, peacebuilders and journalists. Their protection, rights, freedom of expression must be guaranteed. While hailing the signing of the Peace Agreement between the DRC and Rwanda as well as the Declaration of Principles between the DRC and the AFC/M23, Switzerland urges that these agreements be swiftly implemented and stands ready to support parties in these processes.



Tanzania commends the work of the FFM which will contribute to the much-needed permanent peace and stability in the region. Tanzania reaffirms its commitment to cooperation and calls for a peaceful resolution of the conflict, as well as the continued provision of humanitarian assistance to the people and communities affected. Furthermore, Tanzania welcomes the decision taken at the 45th Ordinary Summit of SADC Heads of State and Government held on 17 August 2025, and underscores the importance of the harmonisation between Africa-led processes and other initiatives, including the Washington Accord and the Doha Declaration of Principles. Tanzania further urges the international community to continue supporting efforts to bring to an end the conflict in eastern DRC through peaceful means. In closing, Tanzania stresses the importance of the concerned parties engaging in dialogue in the interest of both countries and the wider region.

Togo appreciates the inclusive character of the FFM report, in particular its prior submission to parties with a view to collecting their observations and comments, which depicts the gravity and urgency of the situation. Togo calls on the international community to take stock of the scope of the task, and welcomes most notably the recommendation calling to support mediation initiatives and the peace process for lasting solutions, in particular by looking at the root causes of the crisis. In this context, Togo welcomes the starting up of direct talks between parties under the Washington Peace Accord, especially with the first meetings of the Joint Observation Committee and the Joint Security and Coordination Mechanism under the aegis of the US, the Qatar and Togo as mediator of the African Union.

Türkiye underlines its strong commitment to the independence, unity and territorial integrity of the DRC. Commending all ongoing efforts to put an end to the conflict in the eastern DRC, Türkiye welcomes the signing of the Peace Agreement between Rwanda and the DRC, as well as the conclusion of the Doha Declaration of Principles between the M23 and the DRC. In full recognition of African ownership, Türkiye commends the contribution of African Union, the EAC and SADC. Despite the real chance for enduring peace in the Great Lakes region, Türkiye remains concerned by the human rights violations in the eastern provinces of the DRC, as a contrast to ongoing peace talks. Türkiye condemns all acts of aggravating the humanitarian situation in the region, putting large civilian populations at risk and leading to loss of life and human rights abuses. The DRC should continue to be accompanied by the international community in its efforts directed to improving the human rights record on her territory. In conclusion, Türkiye stands ready to support any effort aimed at achieving sustainable peace and stability in the Great Lakes region.

The **United Kingdom** remains concerned by the situation in eastern DRC, particularly in M23-occupied areas where the humanitarian situation is critical and the *de facto* authorities are responsible for grave human rights abuses, including rape, murder, and lack of access to essential services. While understanding the serious financial challenges facing the international human rights system, resources must be made available to provide the scrutiny and accountability that the situation so desperately requires. The UK encourages all parties to agree a resolution to this conflict, refrain from inflammatory rhetoric, and respect humanitarian law, including enabling humanitarian access. The UK is deeply concerned by the scale of sexual violence in eastern DRC. There were 10,000 rape and sexual violence cases documented in January and February alone this year. Around 40% of those were children. Echoing the call of the



FFM to all parties to immediately end sexual violence, the UK welcomes the DRC government's efforts to prosecute those who have committed such acts and urges the DRC to intensify efforts to ensure accountability. Lastly, the UK expresses its opposition to the death penalty in all circumstances and encourages the DRC to consider reinstating the moratorium.

Uruguay expresses its consternation at the persistent attacks against civilians perpetrated by M23 and other armed groups, in disregard of the Declaration of Principles signed in Doha on 19 July and the Peace Agreement signed on 27 July in Washington between the DRC and Rwanda. Uruguay is particularly concerned by the serious crisis around civilian protection, which has triggered the alarming humanitarian and human rights situation. Abuse against children and systematic rape and sexual violence against women and girls perpetrated in the utmost savagery warrant utmost rejection and condemnation. Uruguay makes an urgent call for all stakeholders to meet their obligations under international humanitarian law and international human rights law. In closing, it reiterates its support for MONUSCO and its commitment to civilian protection and peace building in the DRC.

Zambia remains deeply invested and expresses its solidarity with the government and the people of the DRC in the pursuit of peace, stability, and sustainable development. Zambia recognises the significant challenges that exist and commends the efforts undertaken at national, regional, and international levels to restore security in the eastern DRC. Zambia continues to host thousands of refugees from the DRC. It stresses the urgent need to protect civilians, guarantee humanitarian access, and continued cooperation with regionally led diplomatic initiatives to foster dialogue and cooperation across the Great Lakes region. Affirming its commitment to supporting efforts to advance peace, human rights, and dignity for all in the DRC, Zambia calls for predictable international assistance to host communities and welcomes enhanced cooperation under item 10 to consolidate peace and human rights in the Great Lakes region.

Views Expressed by Intergovernmental Organizations

The **European Union** commends the work of the FFM, the Experts and the technical assistance provided, particularly in the field of forensic medicine, which plays a vital role in supporting accountability efforts and combating impunity. The EU is deeply alarmed by the dramatic escalation of violence in eastern DRC and by the FFM's report documenting a pattern of widespread human violations and abuses by all parties, including acts which may constitute war crimes and crimes against humanity. The EU is appalled by the targeted attacks against civilians by all parties. The continuing deterioration of the human rights and humanitarian situation in eastern DRC warrants the prompt operationalisation of the COI. Therefore, the EU calls on all countries to ensure that OHCHR is adequately funded to carry out the mandates entrusted to it by the UNHRC.

UNICEF remains gravely concerned by the scale of grave violations committed against children in the DRC. In 2024 alone, more than 4,000 grave violations were verified by the UN, among the highest in the world. Children continue to be recruited and used, killed and maimed, abducted, and subjected to sexual violence. These violations not only destroy childhoods but also perpetuate cycles of fear and instability, undermining prospects for peace and development. UNICEF welcomes efforts taken by the government to strengthen the legal and institutional



framework for child protection, including through the establishment of the National Fund for the Reparation of Victims of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence and Victims of Crimes Against Peace and Security. Building on these important measures, it remains essential to accelerate and sustain concrete actions to prevent grave violations, hold perpetrators accountable, and ensure access to justice and services. UNICEF reiterates its call to parties to the conflict to immediately end grave violations against children and to comply fully with international human rights and humanitarian law. UNICEF urges the international community to strengthen support for child protection, which must be placed at the heart of peace-building and political processes. The children of the DRC have the right to be protected and to live free from violence. Their protection is not only a legal and moral imperative but also a foundation for lasting peace.

Views Expressed by National Human Rights Institutions

The **National Human Rights Commission of the DRC** addresses an urgent call to the collective conscience and genuine solidarity of the UNHRC. In eastern DRC, particularly in the provinces of North Kivu, South Kivu and Ituri, millions of Congolese citizens experience daily terror. Villages are burnt, women are raped, children are recruited forcibly and civilians are massacred. Fundamental rights are blatantly violated and this repeatedly and in a planned fashion. These atrocities are carried out by armed groups supported by foreign forces - in particular the AFC and the M23 - whose ties with Rwanda are robustly documented. These are not mere acts of rebellion but war crimes, crimes against humanity, and grave violations of international humanitarian law. The analysis of data collected reveals that 61 percent of violations related to civil and political rights, in particular the right to life and the right to freedom. The NHRI calls upon the UNHRC to clearly and firmly condemn these violations as well as any foreign support to armed groups; make the COI fully operative; fully support transitional justice mechanisms, reparation for victims and prosecution against perpetrators of various crimes committed in the DRC; and ensure the effective implementation of UNSC resolution 2773 as well as the outcomes of the Washington and of Doha the peace processes. In closing, the NHRC stresses its relentless work to document these violations and provide support to victims.

Views Expressed by Non-Governmental Organizations

Minority Rights Group draws the Council's the attention to the situation of Indigenous peoples in the provinces of the North and South Kivu, partially occupied by the soldiers of the M23 movement, and there are armed clashes between them, the Wazalendo resistance, and the Congolese army. The forests and hills traditionally inhabited by the Indigenous peoples are today sheltering the armed groups and their militias. They are caught in the crossfire, and the Indigenous Batwa people are victims of arbitrary shootings, sexual attacks, and other forms of physical violence, as well as the destruction of houses, shelters, goods, which has led to the massive displacement of the Batwa fleeing their villages. These violations were perpetrated by the combatants of the AFC and M23, but also by the Wazalendo. Approximately 87 Batwa women are reported to have been raped since the beginning of the year. In the forests of Kahuzi-Biega, the members of the Batwa community continue to face serious threats. Many have been forced to flee. The M23 has displaced approximately 600 Batwa families, and this campaign of dispossession undermines the cultural autonomy of the community. The perpetrators of such actions must be held to account.



The **International Federation of ACAT** jointly with the Congolese civil society, welcome the FFM report. Their work to collect, preserve, and analyse evidence has led their mission to reasonably believe that all parties to the conflict have committed war crimes and crimes against humanity. They also managed to identify certain alleged perpetrators. This is an essential step to combating impunity, particularly in a context where peace processes do not include the right to justice for victims of these serious violations. In a situation which is characterised by the collapse of state, prison, and judicial structures, as well as widespread self-censure, because of the fear of reprisal, a number of violations being committed against civil society activists and their families. In these provinces, the organisations presenting this joint statement are particularly worried about the fact that the COI has not yet been set up. It must be done so in order to carry on the work of the FFM and foster proper documentation of violations being committed in eastern DRC.

The **Centre for International Trade for Development (CECIDE)** notes with concern the gravity of the situation in eastern DRC, where armed groups - the M23 and the AFC, supported by Rwanda, have taken control of strategic towns such as Goma and Bukavu. Their attacks have already led to seven million people being displaced. This shows the scope of the humanitarian crisis. There are systematic and serious crimes being committed against civilians. Sexual violence is being used as a weapon of war, with 10,000 cases recorded in just two months, including a very worrying number of children. Indigenous communities are also facing expulsion from their land. These crimes against humanity cannot remain unpunished. CECIDE calls on the UNHRC to break the cycle of indifference and to strengthen support for the FFM, as well as working towards creating a Special Tribunal for the DRC to deliver justice to the victims.

RADDHO welcomes the establishment of the FFM and calls upon states to provide technical and financial support to allow the Mission to fully discharge its mandate. Since the 37th Extraordinary Session on the Human Rights Situation in eastern DRC, one is compelled to note that a human tragedy is still unfolding in spite of diplomatic efforts. RADDHO deplores that no significant progress has been made. Violence by the M23 and the AFC, supported by the Rwandan Armed Forces, continues to be rampant in the east of the country. This has forced Indigenous peoples to leave their land and state control has collapsed in main towns. Due to systematic violence, rape, land expropriation, clearance of villages, extortion and creating a parallel new administration, blocking humanitarian convoys, these war crimes and crimes against humanity continue to be committed. Therefore, RADDHO calls for a Special Court to be established; the respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the DRC; and an immediate ceasefire.

The **Network on Training and Research on African Migration (REFORMAF)** deplores that the situation in eastern DRC is sharply deteriorating, resulting in serious human rights violations and abuses such as summary executions, including of children and conflict-related sexual and gender-based violation. The Rwanda-backed M23 advance to South Kivu has plunged the region into a complex security and humanitarian crisis, provoking the displacement of the population. The M23 armed group summarily executed over 140 civilians, largely ethnic Hutu, in at least 14 villages and farming areas in July 2025 near Virunga National Park, Eastern DRC. Credible reports indicate the number of people killed in Rutshuru territory since July may exceed 300, among the worst atrocities by the M23 since its resurgence in late 2021. REFORMAF voices concern over the events unfolding in South and North Kivu, and their impact on civilians. Violence must stop immediately. All parties must respect international humanitarian law, in particular regarding the

protection of civilians and human rights law, and resume dialogue within the framework of the Rwanda and Nairobi processes.

Defence for Children International describes the DRC as the country with the most frequent serious violations against children worldwide. This situation is exacerbated by urban poverty, overcrowding due to mass displacement, due to armed conflict, and the lack of social services which are adapted. This leads to the recruitment and use of child soldiers. In the RDC, murders, mutilations, kidnapping, and sexual violence against children, mostly girls, the recruitment of children into armed groups and exploitation of children in quarries remains prevalent. Even though the DRC has signed and ratified several international instruments on the rights of the child and has national legislation to uphold them, there are still shortcomings. There is a major gap between the legislation established at a national level and practises. There is an urgent mechanism which needs to be implemented, which allows children in the most exposed zones to be covered. In particular, the issuance of birth registrations, the birth certificates, and instructions given to all armed groups. The country must be encouraged to uphold international instruments to protect children's rights, and funding must be mobilised to ensure the protection of the child relying on NGO and national capacities.

Physicians for Human Rights deplores that the eastern DRC has been bogged down in a conflict with civilians as the main victims. Since the towns of Goma and Bukavu were taken by the M23 at the beginning of 2025, there has been a growth in violence committed by all parties involved in the conflict, despite the various accords signed under the patronage of the US and Qatar. The main victims of these violence are civilian populations, especially in rural areas where there are intense clashes. Many cases of massacres of civilians were reported in Ituri, North and South Kivu, and these are accompanied by sexual violence. Access to medication, medical equipment and rape kits is a major concern for medical staff. Many crimes have been reported by humanitarian actors, human rights defenders, and they are corroborated by UN agencies. It is necessary for enquiries to be conducted and for the perpetrators to be established to fight impunity. The guarantee of non-recurrence is essential for reparations. The Governments of the DRC and Rwanda, as well as to the M23, shall uphold the ceasefire and facilitate humanitarian access to vulnerable populations, primarily when humanitarian workers move between different areas. The prevention of human rights violations and international humanitarian law, in particular sexual violence, is a major concern.

Ensemble contre la peine de mort (ECPM) notes that, while the DRC has signed the lifting of the moratorium in March 2024, it marked a grave deterioration in terms of the right to life. While welcoming the absence of effective executions to this day, in 2024, at least 480 persons were condemned to death, which is an increase of 300% compared to 2023. In this context, ECPM, the Coalition Against the Death Penalty and FIACAT are fearful of an instrumentalization of the death penalty with a gradually increasing repressive climate where the death penalty could be used for populist and political purposes. They therefore call on the President of the Republic to continue to restore the rule of law and respect the Constitution, which enshrines the sacred right to life in articles 16 and 61 and international conventions ratified. If the DRC abolishes the death penalty, it would be a genuine example in Africa and the world. The Coalition encourages the Government to renounce to the resumption of executions; officialise the moratorium; uphold international



norms in terms of due process; abolish all death penalties and commute them into life sentences.

The **World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT)** and the SOS-Torture Network draw the Council's attention to the human rights violations and the needs of human rights defenders in the DRC. Since the very first interactive dialogue on the DRC, OMCT has documented 27 cases of attacks against their members, members of NGOs, citizen movements, activists and lawyers. These attacks were perpetrated in reprisal for their human rights activism, such as holding demonstrations or other public statements against human rights violations, as well as the protection of civilians against such reprisals. 18 attacks took place in Goma, three in Bukavu, one in Kinshasa, and five in other towns. Amongst these attacks, OMCT has counted six cases of torture, two enforced disappearances, two arbitrary detentions, two attempted assassinations, three attempted abductions, seven physical attacks, and 11 threats of death. All of these were carried out by the AFC and the M23, most of whom knew their victims. OMCT calls on the Council to do everything in its power to ensure that the physical and moral integrity of human rights defenders is protected, as well as their families, that the perpetrators are identified and prosecuted, and that financial help is provided.

United Towns Agency for North-South Cooperation deplores that despite the DRC's extraordinary natural wealth, too many Congolese still live in poverty, without access to quality education, health care, or security. In regions such as Katanga, parents struggle to keep schools open. While in Kivu and Goma, civilians, especially women and children, remain victims of violence and instability. This situation is worsening by corruption and poor governance, which diverts resources away from the people. For decades, the Congolese population has carried the heavy burden of conflict with millions of lives lost. The Agency calls upon the international community to act with renewed determination to strengthen transparency and the rule of law; to invest in education and humanitarian programmes; to protect the most vulnerable; and to ensure that Congo's wealth benefits its citizens rather than a privileged few. The Agency stands ready to work with governments, civil society, and partners to build peace, restore dignity, and turn Congo's resources into a driver of sustainable development.

FACTS & FIGURES ON ID PARTICIPATION

32 State Delegations

2 Inter-Governmental Organizations and UN Entities

1 National Human Rights Institution

10 Non-Governmental Organizations