



Update on women, peace and security in the Democratic Republic of the Congo November 29th 2022

The Informal Expert Group (IEG) of the Security Council on Women and Peace and Security discussed the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) in February 2018 ([S/2018/362](#)), September 2018 ([S/2018/885](#)), March 2019 ([S/2019/296](#)), and November 2020 ([S/2020/1297](#)). This update summarizes relevant developments since the last meeting in November 2020.

Developments in the Security Council

On 20 December 2021, the Security Council adopted **resolution 2612 (2021)**, extending **MONUSCO's mandate** until 20 December 2022. As previous resolutions, resolution 2612 (2021), includes extensive language on issues related to women, peace and security. Since the last meeting of the IEG, the Council included additional language requesting the mission to ensure that risks of sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict situations are included in the Mission's data collection, threat analysis and early warning system; to ensure safe, enabling and gender-sensitive working environments for women in peacekeeping operations, reaffirming the importance of uniformed and civilian gender advisors, gender focal points in all mission components, gender expertise and capacity strengthening in executing the mission mandate in a gender-responsive manner; and to pay specific attention to the needs of women formerly associated with armed forces and groups in its support to the disarmament, demobilisation, repatriation, resettlement and reintegration (DDRRR) process.

On 30 June 2022, the Security Council adopted **resolution 2641 (2022)** renewing the **DRC sanctions regime** and extending the mandate of the Group of Experts until August 2023. China, Ghana, Gabon, Kenya and the Russia Federation abstained. The DRC sanctions regime includes a listing criterion related to violations of human rights or international humanitarian law, including rape and other sexual violence but no standalone listing criterion related to sexual violence. The mandate of the Group of Experts does not include provisions requesting the necessary gender expertise or integrate gender as a cross-cutting issue across its investigations and reporting. No individual or group has been listed since the last meeting of the IEG. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict briefed the Sanctions Committee in July 2021.

In its 2021 and 2022 final reports, the **Group of Experts** documented numerous cases of conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV), including rape, gang-rape, forced marriage, sexual slavery, but also massacres and mutilations of women and girls, from babies to 70-year-olds, perpetrated by different actors. For example, the Group documented continuous CRSV, committed by CODECO combatants in Ituri, including as a means of reprisal, noting that these acts are sanctionable under the sanctions resolution. The Group also documented CRSV committed by combatants of Twirwaneho and the Mai-Mai coalition in South Kivu, noting that both groups implemented a strategy of targeted abductions, rapes and killings of women to prevent their access to fields, effectively hindering women's access to food. Furthermore, the Group identified one member of the ADF leadership (Mzee Wa Kazi alias Lumisa or Lumwisa) who is responsible of handling recruits and abductees, including women, whom he would assign as spouses to different combatants. The group also reported instances of CRSV perpetrated by state actors. For example, in its June 2022 report, the Group documented numerous cases of sexual violence, including gang rapes, committed by members of the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (FARDC) deployed in Djugu territory during the state of siege, noting that these acts are sanctionable under the sanctions

regime. Moreover, in its 2021 final report, the Group noted that members of the DRC security forces deployed in Djugu and Irumu territories committed exactions, including CRSV, in particular against the Lendu and Bira populations considered as affiliated to CODECO and FPIC. It also documented cases of rape of women and girls by FARDC members deployed in the Hauts-Plateaux.

On 3 June 2022, the Security Council issued a **presidential statement on the situation in the DRC** and urged the government of the DRC to hold accountable those responsible for violations of international humanitarian law or violations and abuses of human rights, including those involving widespread sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). In the same statement, the Council encouraged continued consideration of the needs and experiences of women as an integral part of demobilization, disarmament and reintegration (DDR) processes. In **another presidential statement**, issued on 20 October 2021 **related to the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation (PSC) Framework for the DRC and the Region** the Security Council urged for increased efforts in promoting the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in political processes, conflict prevention, mediation, resolution, peacebuilding, post-conflict reconstruction, development and at all levels of decision-making. The Council encouraged the regional member states and the international community to create economic opportunities for women and to strengthen their capacity to ensure women's full and active participation in economic life, including in cross border trading, commercial exchanges and the productive utilisation of natural resources to further women's leadership as agents of sustainable development. The statement urged to prevent the exploitation of women and children in the trade of these resources.

In a **press statement** issued on 31 March 2021, Council members took note of President Tshisekedi's intention for the Government to be composed of 30 per cent of women. A press statement issued on 4 February 2022, in which Council members condemned attacks on the Savo camp for internally displaced persons in Ituri province does not include gender-specific references.

Six Congolese women from civil society briefed the Council in its country-specific meetings since the last meeting of the IEG. In March 2021, **Sandrine Lusamba**, Executive Coordinator of the organization Women's Solidarity for Peace and Integral Development, called for gender-sensitive approaches to promoting intercommunity reconciliation, the governance of natural resources and conflict prevention as well as a gender responsive transition process. She also urged the Council to ensure that the UN monitors attacks against women peacebuilders, politicians, activists and human rights defenders as part of early warning processes and prioritizes gender-sensitive community engagement. In July 2021, **Ritha Kibambe**, Deputy Head of the Laboratory of Medical Biology of the Ngaliema Clinic in Kinshasa told the Council how women have mobilized and organized COVID-19 trainings for hospital staff while at the same time being specifically affected by the pandemic. In October 2021, **Nelly Godelieve Madioka Mbangu**, Coordinator of Sauti Ya Mama Mukongomani/Voice of Congolese Women spoke about the fragile situation in eastern DRC, where numerous wars and intercommunal conflicts led to sexual violence against women and girls, committed by armed perpetrators including the FARDC. Noting women's contribution to the peacebuilding process through local community conflict-resolution mechanisms and highlighting support provided by the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund, she called for more support for women's organizations. In December 2021, **Marie-Madeleine Kalala**, women's rights activist and member of the African Women Leaders Network (AWLN), asked that Congolese women, including through the national chapter of the AWLN, be involved in the Mission's transition and drawdown plans, and that these should not be rushed. In March 2022, **Léa Babite Inyobondaye** was invited to brief the Council, but she was not able to connect due to technical reasons. The President of the Security Council committed to distribute her remarks to all Council members. In June 2022, **Julienne Lusenge**, President of Female Solidarity for Integrated Peace and Development, gave a horrific testimony of sexual violence and cannibalism by armed groups and called for more assistance for orphans and widows.

In May 2022, **Rachel Boketa**, Country Director of Women for Women International in the DRC, briefed the Security Council in its open debate on protection of civilians in armed conflict. She noted that women in the DRC are not only plagued by insecurity and conflict, but also face harmful, patriarchal social norms and beliefs, which hinder their access to basic social services and humanitarian aid. She called for gender-transformative approaches in humanitarian assistance and the inclusion of local women's organizations in protection and humanitarian strategy.

Women's participation in the peace processes and in politics

Women have been largely absent from the Nairobi process. No woman was among the nearly 30 delegates from armed groups from the DRC who participated in the Nairobi consultation in April 2022. Women leaders expressed concern that the government of the DRC has not opened spaces for women to share their perspectives and that only the UN enabled women to bring their messages to high-level discussions. Ahead of the Nairobi talks in November 2022, the facilitator of the Nairobi process, Kenya's former president Uhuru Kenyatta, met with representatives of communities from the conflict-affected provinces, including several women. Furthermore, the former transitional President of the Central African Republic and co-Chair of the Network of African Women in Conflict Prevention and Mediation, Catherine Samba Panza, and the Vice-President of the National Assembly of Burundi and President of the Regional Women's Forum of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, Sabine Ntakarutimana led a high-level advocacy mission to Kinshasa to promote women's participation in the Nairobi process and in the Demobilization, Disarmament, Community Recovery and Stabilization Program (P-DDRCS) and exchanged with a number of stakeholders, including women and youth groups. Women leaders warn of a lack of knowledge and misconceptions about the Nairobi process among the local population and that the little information available is often instrumentalized by local leaders, in some cases against the UN. They urged to work closely with local women civil society leaders to fight disinformation and promote local involvement in peace efforts.

One of the three **P-DDRCS Provincial Coordinators** appointed by the President on 26 May 2022 for Ituri, North Kivu and South Kivu is a woman as well as three of their six deputies. A **regional network of women mediators** to strengthen ongoing peace and stabilization processes was established at a conference on the involvement of women in peace processes, convened in Kinshasa by the Economic Community of Central African States.

Women are actively engaged in peace efforts at the grassroots level. In Irumu territory in Ituri province, MONUSCO supported women's participation in a dialogue that resulted in a landmark local peace agreement between the Bira and the Hema communities. In Kpandroma and Rethy in the same province, MONUSCO supported the participation of women in a series of intracommunal dialogues which led to the signing of a document by all factions of CODECO stating their willingness to cease hostilities against the FARDC, PNC, and other communities in Irumu, Djugu, and Mahagi and, with the exception of the ARDPC, to adhere to the Nairobi process. Furthermore, in Nyiragongo Territory, North Kivu, a network of 20 women mediators resolved six conflicts related to family, land and inheritance, and referred two conflicts related to sexual violence to the local police. Women in Eastern DRC also negotiated the release of children associated with armed groups and supported DDR initiatives.

Some women community leaders **participate in community alert networks and local peace committees.** Following awareness-raising workshops on women's role in reducing insecurity and violence through their participation in local early warning systems and information networks, the military administrator of Masisi territory pledged to involve women into all local peace and security processes in his entity. In Minembwe, South Kivu, following the training of women and sensitization of village chiefs and journalists, an action plan for the women mediators' network of Minembwe was drafted, and the "Women Mediators Declaration" was signed, recorded, and broadcasted on the local radio. Despite these positive developments,

insecurity, violence, patriarchal beliefs and limited socioeconomic opportunities continue to be barriers for women's participation in peace processes.

With the support of the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund, women leaders in North Kivu undertook an **in-depth analysis of the peace agreements** signed by the Congolese government with armed groups. The found that across all levels, women's participation in peace processes is weak and that peace agreements are signed without consulting the population.

Women's representation in the government increased. The government announced on 21 April 2021 includes 15 women in ministerial posts, representing 27 per cent of the total number of positions compared to 17 per cent in the previous government. The positions held by women include the Minister of Justice and the Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development, who is also a Vice Prime Minister. In the **gubernatorial elections** held in 15 of the 26 provinces in May and July 2022, four women were elected as governors and one woman as vice-governor. **Women's participation on the legislative level is much lower.** Only 9 per cent of the members of the National Assembly and 19 per cent of members of the Senate are women. Two of the seven positions in the new permanent bureau of the National Assembly and three of the seven positions in the new permanent bureau of the Senate are occupied by women. Only 16.6 per cent of the seats in the **provincial assemblies** are held by women.

The **new electoral law**, promulgated on 29 June 2022, provides incentives for women's inclusion on candidate lists, including an exemption from payment of the required deposit if women make up at least 50 per cent of the list. The new law also removes a provision of the previous law according to which lists of candidates without women remained admissible. In January 2022, for the first time, a woman was appointed as Deputy National Executive Secretary of the **Independent National Electoral Commission**. Previously, four women had been appointed as members of the Commission. As another first, on 6 July 2021, a woman was appointed as the first female Governor of the Banque Centrale du Congo. Three other women were appointed to the Bank's Board of Directors.

The DRC is currently implementing its **second National Action Plan on WPS (NAP)** covering 2020-2023. The technical committee of the National Secretariat met for the first time in June 2022 and the First National Steering Committee was launched in July 2022. Plans for the establishment of a Trust Fund established in the second NAP are ongoing, and a new website presenting a database on women, peace and security in the DRC was presented in November 2022. **Provincial Action Plans** have been adopted in the three provinces of North Kivu, Ituri and Tanganyika, and the development of a provincial plan for South Kivu is in the planning.

Human rights issues, including conflict-related sexual violence and gender-based violence

Conflict-related sexual violence is common in the DRC and used as a tactic in armed conflict. Between 1 January and 31 October 2022, MONUSCO documented and verified 537 cases of CRSV, all involving rape. These cases were committed against women (379), girls (154), and men (4) and occurred in the conflict-affected provinces in Eastern DRC. The majority of victims (79,3 per cent), has been attributed to members of armed groups, including Nyatura Bazungu (109, various Mai-Mai factions (91), CODECO (79), Twa (36), Raia Mutomboki (34), NDC (13), APCLS (13), M23 (11), FDLR (5), FRPI (8), and other armed groups (27). 21,4 percent of the cases have been committed by State actors, including the FARDC (81), the National Police (PNC) (23), the National Agency of Investigations (5), and other state agents. Cases remain underreported, especially in less-accessible areas with reduced presence of security and humanitarian actors, such as the north-east of Walikale territory in North Kivu, where acts of CRSV continue to be used as reprisals against civilians alleged of supporting rival armed groups.

Cases of **gender-based violence (GBV)** spiked. Between January and September 2021, 74,275 cases of GBV were reported, an increase of 73 per cent compared to the same period in 2020. Women and girls were by far the most affected (94 per cent of cases). Incidents of GBV are mostly reported in the provinces of Kasai Central (almost 26 per cent), North Kivu (almost 21 per cent), South Kivu (12 per cent), Kasai (11 per cent) and Ituri (7 per cent). More than half of the recorded cases of GBV were rapes. Other forms of GBV include psychological and emotional violence, physical assault, sexual assault, forced marriage, denial of resources and opportunities, and sexual abuse and exploitation. Most of the documented cases of GBV were committed when women were going to the fields, collecting water or firewood, during displacement or abduction following an intrusion or an attack on a locality, or in a dungeon during an illegal arrest by state agents.

The Secretary-General's report on **children and armed conflict** in the DRC published on 10 October 2022 documented the recruitment and use of 524 girls, alongside 3,377 boys, between April 2020 and 31 March 2022. The report found that girls were mainly used in support roles (311), as combatants (70) and as concubines and sexual slaves (63). The report also documented rape and other forms of sexual violence against 933 girls, alongside 11 boys, between the ages of 2 and 17, during the same period.

SGBV survivors often face stigma and exclusion by their own community. Despite outreach campaigns and referrals by humanitarian actors, some GBV survivors do not access psychosocial support for fear of reprisals from family members. Mothers of children born of rape are often seen as 'affiliated' with the perpetrator and denied access to basic social services, such as education, health, and income-generating activities. To survive, they often do not see another choice than joining armed groups.

MONUSCO female and mixed engagement teams conducted **gender-sensitive long-range patrols** and foot patrols in Ituri, North Kivu and South Kivu which facilitated communication between local populations and the Mission and led to better responses to CRSV. MONUSCO continued to support Local Protection Committees to assess and update Community Protection Plans which identified CRSV threats and protection actions for women and girls. Sensitizations on the prevention and response to CRSV which led to commitments by participants to restate the message in their communities. Despite increased cooperation and joint analysis of CRSV hotspots between humanitarian actors and MONUSCO in North Kivu in the first months of 2022, MONUSCO's capacity to provide protection by projection and to act on this analysis was impacted by the consequences of the resurgence of the M23 group and of anti-MONUSCO protests throughout the province.

Some progress has been made in the fight against impunity for CRSV. On 23 November 2020, the Operational Military Court of North Kivu sentenced perpetrators of war crimes, including rape and sexual slavery committed between 2007 and 2017 in North Kivu. MONUSCO provided protection to victims and witnesses and technical, logistical and financial support to judicial authorities during joint investigations and the trial. Furthermore, in 2021, military courts convicted 66 members of the FARDC, 12 members of the Congolese National Police and 4 members of armed groups and 34 civilians for CRSV. The convictions included the confirmation of the sentence of the Mai-Mai Raia Mutomboki commander Chance Mihonya Kolokolo on 21 September 2022 to life imprisonment for crimes against humanity, including rape, in appeal proceedings. In addition, he was ordered to pay USD 358,000 to civil parties, including 17 victims of rape. However, the reparations have yet to be disbursed. Neither the current Penal Military Code nor the draft counter-terrorism law which is currently in the process of being adopted by the Parliament foresee sexual violence as act of terrorism which constitutes a challenge for the prosecution of sexual violence in the context of terrorism.

However, overall **women's access to justice** remains limited due to structural gender inequalities, discrimination and the absence or the remoteness of courts from localities where GBV cases are committed. In Ituri, the only High Court where cases of rape can be prosecuted is located in Bunia. This makes it

extremely difficult for survivors living in some territories such as Irumu and Djugu to have access to justice and any form of reparation. In most cases, survivors do not press charges because they fear rejection by their families or communities, or retaliation. In North Kivu and Ituri, the state of siege imposed since May 2021 resulted in a decreased capacity of tribunals in dealing with cases of GBV. Furthermore, often competent criminal justice authorities, including the police, prosecutors and judges, are not properly trained to handle sensitive cases such as SGBV cases which often leads to revictimizations.

The government of the DRC, with the support of the UN, has launched national consultations on **transitional justice** in the 26 provinces of the country to gather sex-disaggregated data on expectations and needs in terms of truth, justice, reparations and guarantees of non-repetition for crimes which affect disproportionately women, such as CRSV. Until now, 5,793 women have been surveyed (37 per cent of all participants). In January 2022, the Government established an *ad hoc* multisectoral **Commission on Reparations** (FONAREV Commission), responsible for developing a national framework on reparations and to address the long-standing issue of the non-payment of judicial reparations. A draft law on the protection and reparation of victims of CRSV and other crimes against peace and security is currently pending approval of the National Assembly. In parallel, a decree establishing a reparations fund was adopted in September 2022. While these developments are seen to go in the right direction, the draft law and the decree are not fully aligned with international human rights law, standards and best practices, nor are they fully linked to other current transitional justice initiatives.

In the context of the **Joint Communiqué on the Fight Against Sexual Violence in Conflict in the DRC**, in 2020 and 2021, the FARDC and the PNC adopted Action Plans to tackle CRSV within their ranks which are now being implemented. A total of 52 FARDC commanders, including 10 generals, and 129 PNC commanders, including 21 women, signed pledges to combat sexual violence in accordance with the plan. In July 2022, it was decided to establish a Task Force on CRSV aimed at bringing together all relevant Ministries and other entities to ensure a collective and harmonized effort to realise the commitments under the Joint Communiqué.

Women human rights defenders and women's organizations have been targeted by authorities. According to Frontline Defenders, on 4 May 2022, military officers raided the offices of the women's organization Dynamique des Femmes Leaders d'IRUMU (DYFELE) in the Irumu territory searching for the woman human rights defender Miriam Furaha, a member of the organization. Two computers were confiscated during the raid. Miriam Furaha had previously been attacked several times by men in military uniforms in her home. DYFELE has continuously been targeted by law enforcement since the instatement of the state of emergency over North-Kivu in May 2021. In addition, there are reports of **reprisals against CRSV survivors, medical personnel and human rights monitors** by the Nduma Defence of Congo – Rénové (NDC/R) faction after the group accused multiple NGOs in North Kivu of making false accusations of acts of CRSV by members of the group.

Humanitarian issues and women's socio-economic situation

The DRC has the largest number of **internally displaced people** on the African continent. In total 5.55 million people are internally displaced and more than half of them (51 per cent) are women. Since the beginning of 2021, more than one million people have been newly displaced in DRC. GBV is both a trigger and a consequence of displacement. In many displacement settings, lack of lighting, separate latrines and showers, and the search for means of survival such as household work create an environment conducive to GBV. Survivors are often targeted during pendular movements from the area of displacement to their villages of origin, during the search for food or other forms of livelihood. Furthermore, many displaced women and girls are forced into harmful coping strategies such as early marriage and survival sex. Six out of 10 displaced or returnee women have been forced to exchange sex for domestic or agricultural work to

support themselves. **Child marriage** is widespread with 29 per cent of girls being married before the age of 18.

Health services are less available in rural and/or conflict-affected areas. Fear of stigmatization and attacks or of being infected with other diseases discourage survivors from seeking help. Insecurity and poor infrastructure in health facilities limit access of women and girls to GBV emergency assistance within the crucial 72-hour window after a sexual assault. There are reports of armed actors targeting health structures and personnel, to prevent cases of sexual violence from being recorded.

The **maternal mortality** rate stands at 473 per 100,000 live births. Only 17 per cent of pregnant women make their first antenatal visit within the first three months of pregnancy and only 50 per cent of women receive post-natal health check-ups. Many **pregnant women continue to work in mines** despite legislation prohibiting this.

26.4 million people experience **acute food insecurity**, of whom 51 percent are women.

Discrimination and gender inequality continue to impact women in many areas of their lives such as **education**. Only 60 per cent of women are literate, compared to 80 per cent of men. Similarly, only 36.7 per cent of women received secondary education, compared to 65.8 per cent of men. Furthermore, 65 per cent of men use a **mobile phone** compared to only 42 per cent of women. The number is even lower among rural women of where only 19 per cent have a mobile phone. Moreover, only 17 per cent of women have access to a **radio**, the most common means of information in the DRC, compared to 40 per cent of men.

Women's economic participation, including the management of agricultural land, is also unequal, due to discrimination in land rights. In many communities, women heads of household cannot obtain land ownership on their own and widowed women cannot dispose of the deceased husband's land without the approval of the family council. This situation increases women's risks of sexual exploitation and abuse in displacement contexts where land is a highly in-demand resource.

MONUSCO

In the **new transition plan** for MONUSCO three of the 18 benchmarks are gender responsive and 40 per cent of the 83 indicators relate to gender issues such as women's participation in community mechanisms or the implementation of the NAP. However, following the outbreak of anti-MONUSCO protests in July 2022, and the Congolese government's intention to re-evaluate the joint transition plan it remains unclear whether previously agreed upon commitments will be maintained.

On **gender parity**, as at September 2022, women represented 25.46 per cent of MONUSCO's military staff officers and military observers, while contingent female participation stood at only 5.64 per cent. Furthermore, women made up 16.2 per cent of the formed police units of MONUSCO, lagging behind the 25 per cent goal set for the end of 2022. 23.8 per cent women of the civilian personnel were women.

Sexual exploitation and abuse

Between November 2021 and August 2022, MONUSCO recorded a total of 46 allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA), some relating to incidence that occurred in 2022, others relating to incidents dating back to as far as 2004. The allegations include exploitative relationships, transactional sex, sex with minors, and paternity claims implicating both, uniformed and civilian personnel. The mission, in coordination with the Senior Victims' Rights Officer, provides assistance to victims of SEA and the children subject to paternity claims, including medical and psychosocial support. The mission's prevention measures against SEA include strict non-fraternization policies within uniformed components, risk

assessments, enforcement of curfews and out-of-bounds areas, mandatory trainings of uniformed and civilian personnel, and capacity-building and engagement with host communities. In addition, MONUSCO is carrying out awareness-raising campaigns in partnership with local authorities and civil society organizations. From 31 October to 7 November 2021, South Africa deployed a paternity and maintenance support team to MONUSCO. The team collected biological samples to determine the paternity of 18 children of SEA victims of members of the South African National Defence Force. In her briefing at the Security Council in March 2021, woman leader Sandrine Lusamba noted that cases of SEA tarnish the mission's reputation among the civilian population and lamented that contributing countries rarely initiate criminal investigations.

In September 2021, the **independent commission on SEA of the World Health Organization (WHO)**, which was set up following allegations against WHO staff in the context of the response to the 10th Ebola outbreak, released its final investigative report. The report included an examination of how its system had failed to prevent or detect widespread instances of sexual exploitation and abuse. The report recommended to take note of the failures and to exact stronger measures to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse, drawing on the activities and lessons learned from the wider United Nations system over the past five years.

Recommendations

In the upcoming negotiations on the Democratic Republic of the Congo in the Security Council, the Security Council should retain the references to women, peace and security in resolution 2612 (2021), and consider the following language in operational paragraphs:

Calls for the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in peace processes from the early stages and at all levels, including in the Nairobi process, as well as in the implementation and monitoring, and as beneficiaries of the operationalization of the national Demobilization, Disarmament, Community Recovery and Stabilization Program.

Calls for the full, equal, meaningful and safe participation of women at all levels of the process leading to the elections scheduled for 2023 and requests MONUSCO to support the Government of the DRC, the Independent National Electoral Commission, political actors and civil society to strengthen the meaningful and safe participation of women in this process as voters, candidates, observers, civic educators and administrators.

Requests MONUSCO to monitor and report specifically on violations, abuses and reprisals committed against women in public life, including women peacebuilders, human rights defenders, journalists and politicians, and to ensure that this information is included in the Mission's data collection, threat analysis and early warning system.

Requests MONUSCO to prioritize gender-sensitive community engagement, including regular consultations with women's civil society organizations, in all areas of its mandate implementation and in its efforts to prevent and counter disinformation as well as hate, tribalistic, xenophobic and discriminatory speech.

Stresses the importance of a gender responsive transition process and request MONUSCO to establish formal structure to facilitate the participation of civil society, including women's groups, regularly consult with women's civil society organizations across the country at all stages of the transition and to ensure that activities related to women, peace and security are transferred in a sustainable manner. Requests MONUSCO and the United Nations system to ensure that gender remains a cross-cutting consideration of the priority benchmarks to be identified in the re-assessed Transition Plan.

When renewing the DRC sanctions regime and extending the mandate of the Group of Experts, the Security Council should consider adding a standalone listing criterion related to sexual violence, request the Secretariat to include the necessary gender expertise on the Group of Experts, and request the Group of Experts to integrate gender as a cross-cutting issue across its investigations and reporting. The Sanctions Committee should consider listings related to conflict-related sexual violence.

In addition, the IEG co-chairs and other Council members should:

- Support the implementation, resourcing, and review of the Second National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security, as well as the development and adoption of a Third National Action Plan with the participation of women's civil society organizations.
- Provide financial support to women-led local peacebuilding initiatives through long-term and flexible funding for women's civil society organizations.
- Urge the government of the DRC to adopt the planned policy framework on reparations and develop and operationalize the reparations fund for survivors of conflict-related sexual violence.
- Urge the inclusion of local women's organizations in the humanitarian response.
- Encourage the government of the DRC to take a strong lead in setting up and strengthening the Task Force to implement the Joint Communiqué on the Fight Against Sexual Violence in Conflict in the DRC.
- Encourage the government of the DRC to align the text of the draft reparations law with international human rights standards and to adopt a separate law on victim and witness protection. With regards to the reparations fund, encourage the government to ensure transparency and include sufficient and dedicated funding in its national budget.

ANNEX

Relevant language in resolution 2612 (2021) extending the mandate of MONUSCO

Reaffirming the important role of women and youth in the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts, as well as in peacebuilding and electoral processes, stressing the importance of their full, equal, effective and meaningful participation in all efforts for the maintenance of and promotion of peace and security in the DRC,

Expressing great concern over the humanitarian situation that has left an estimated 27 million Congolese in need of humanitarian assistance (...), calling on member States and other international partners to scale up funding and contribute to the United Nations humanitarian appeals for the DRC and the region (...) including by addressing the protection and assistance needs of (...) all survivors of sexual and gender-based violence,

Recalling all its relevant resolutions on women, peace and security (...), further welcoming efforts by the Government of the DRC to implement resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#) (...), expressing grave concern over the high number of violations against children, in particular sexual and gender-based violence being committed by security forces,

Welcoming the efforts of MONUSCO and international partners in delivering training in (...) gender mainstreaming (...), protection from sexual and gender-based violence to Congolese security institutions (...)

2. (...) Further calls upon all political stakeholders to work, with the support of MONUSCO's good offices, toward peaceful, transparent, inclusive and credible processes for the presidential and legislative elections scheduled in 2023 (...) and to ensure the full, equal, effective and meaningful participation of women at all stages;

6. Urges the Government of the DRC to hold accountable those responsible for violations of international humanitarian law or violations and abuses of human rights (...) including those involving (...) widespread sexual and gender-based violence (...)

12. Strongly condemns all armed groups operating in the DRC and their violations of international humanitarian law as well as other applicable international law (...) especially (...) sexual and gender-based violence (...)

17. Notes that drivers behind different armed groups' activities and militia violence are varied, internal and external (...), calls on the Government of the DRC to take further action in this respect, combining military and non-military approaches (...), and including through tailored Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) of ex-combatants into civilian life and local peacebuilding initiatives which are sensitive to the needs and experiences of women and girls (...),

20. Welcomes the preliminary commitments and actions taken by President Tshisekedi and his government to advance security sector reform (SSR) (...). further calls upon the Government of the DRC to uphold its national commitments to SSR, including by (...) taking into account women's full, equal, effective and meaningful participation and safety, and notes with concern the limited progress in those fields essential for the DRC's stabilisation to date;

29. Decides that the mandate of MONUSCO shall include the following priority tasks (...):

- *Work with the Government of the DRC and humanitarian workers to identify threats to civilians (...) including all forms of sexual and gender-based violence (...);*
- *Strengthen the Mission's early warning and response mechanisms, including by systematically recording and analysing its rate of response and ensure that risks of sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict situations are included in the Mission's data collection, threat analysis and early warning system;*
- *Provide good offices and technical support, in coordination with regional and international partners, with a view to furthering reconciliation, democratisation and inclusion, addressing the root causes of conflict and promoting intercommunal and gender-responsive reconciliation and countering hate speech, including through political support and engagement with interlocutors across the political spectrum, including the Government, opposition parties, local authorities, women and civil society;*
- *Encourage inclusive SSR which delivers security and justice to all through independent, accountable and functioning justice and security institutions which take into account women's full, equal and meaningful participation and safety (...)*
- *Provide good offices, advice and assistance to the Government of the DRC to (...) a flexible disarmament and demobilisation approach, coordinated under the framework of the ISSSS, while paying specific attention to the needs of women and children formerly associated with armed forces and groups;*
- *Provide support to the disarmament, demobilisation, repatriation, resettlement and reintegration (DDRRR) process to return and reintegrate foreign combatants not suspected of genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity or abuses of human rights and their dependants to a peaceful civilian life in their country of origin, or a receptive third country while paying specific attention to the needs of women and children formerly associated with armed forces and groups;*
- *Continue to collaborate with the Government of the DRC to consolidate the gains of the Action Plan to Prevent and End the Recruitment and Use of Children and expedite its implementation, including on the aspects related to Sexual Violence by the FARDC (...)*

32. Requests MONUSCO to take fully into account gender considerations as a crosscutting issue throughout its mandate and to assist the Government of the DRC and other relevant stakeholders in creating a legal, political and socio-economic environment conducive to ensuring the full, equal, effective and meaningful participation and full involvement and representation of women at all levels, and survivors of sexual and gender-based violence, for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security, protection of civilians, including by engaging women's networks as partners in protection, support to DDR and SSR efforts, and support to stabilisation efforts through, inter alia, the provision of civilian and uniformed gender and women protection advisers and focal points at headquarters and field levels, participation of women civil society leaders and organization members with regards to conflict prevention and resolution, public institutions and decision-making, requests MONUSCO support the government in advancing women's full, equal and meaningful political participation, in particular achieving the 30% constitutional quota and further requests enhanced reporting by MONUSCO to the Council on this issue;

33. Acknowledges the important role of United Nations Women Protection Advisers deployed in MONUSCO in supporting the Government of the DRC to implement its commitments on addressing sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict situations and calls on MONUSCO to ensure they continue to work closely with the Government of the DRC at both strategic and operational levels;

34. Reiterates the urgent and imperative need to hold accountable all perpetrators of violations of international humanitarian law, requests MONUSCO to accelerate the coordinated implementation of monitoring, analysis and reporting arrangements on sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict situations;

42. Requests the Secretary-General to implement the following activities in the planning and conduct of MONUSCO's operations within the limits of the mandate and area of operation and in line with existing United Nations guidelines and regulations:

- Strengthening its sexual and gender-based violence prevention and response activities in line with resolution [2467 \(2019\)](#), including by assisting the parties with activities consistent with resolution [2467 \(2019\)](#), and by ensuring that risks of sexual and gender-based violence are included in the Mission's data collection and threat analysis and early warning systems by engaging in an ethical manner with survivors and victims of sexual and gender-based violence, and women's organizations;
- Implementing resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#) and all resolutions addressing women, peace, and security, including by seeking to increase the number of women in MONUSCO in line with resolution [2538 \(2020\)](#), as well as to ensure the full, equal, and meaningful participation of women in all aspects of operations, including by ensuring safe, enabling and gender-sensitive working environments for women in peacekeeping operations, taking fully into account gender considerations as a crosscutting issue throughout its mandate, and reaffirming the importance of uniformed and civilian gender advisors, gender focal points in all mission components, gender expertise and capacity strengthening in executing the mission mandate in a gender-responsive manner;
- Implementing the United Nations zero-tolerance policy on serious misconduct, sexual exploitation and abuse, and sexual harassment, and all actions under resolution [2272 \(2016\)](#), and to report to the Security Council if such cases of misconduct occur;

46. Requests troop- and police-contributing countries to implement relevant provisions of resolution [2538 \(2020\)](#) and all other relevant resolutions on reducing barriers to and increasing women's participation at all levels and in all positions in peacekeeping, including by ensuring safe, enabling and gender-sensitive working environments for women in peacekeeping operations;

47. Urges troop- and police-contributing countries to continue taking appropriate action to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse, including vetting of all personnel, predeployment and in-mission awareness training, to ensure full accountability in cases of such conduct involving their personnel, including through timely investigations of all allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse by troop- and police-contributing countries to hold perpetrators accountable, to repatriate units when there is credible evidence of widespread or systemic sexual exploitation and abuse by those units, and to report to the United Nations fully and promptly on actions undertaken;

54. Recognising the progress made by the Government of the DRC and its efforts to fulfil its commitments (...), initiate appropriate disciplinary and judicial procedures against individuals responsible for human rights violations and abuses, including crimes against children and sexual and gender-based violence, and work towards eliminating human rights violations committed by Congolese security forces;

55. Requests the Secretary-General to report to the Council every three months (...) and further requests the Secretary-General to include gender analysis in all reports to the Security Council;