4. The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo

During the period under review, the Security Council held one meeting and adopted two resolutions, both under Chapter VII of the Charter, in connection with the situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo. More information on the meetings, including on participants and speakers, is provided in table 1 below. In addition, Council members held four open videoconferences in connection with this item, two of which were held for the announcement of the vote on the resolutions adopted. Council members also held a closed videoconference with countries contributing troops and police to the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), pursuant to resolution 1353 (2001). More information on the videoconferences is provided in table 2 below. In addition to the meetings and videoconferences in 2020, Council members held informal consultations of the whole and an informal interactive dialogue to discuss this item.

In 2020, the Council was regularly briefed by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Head of MONUSCO further to the reports of the Secretary-General. The Council was also briefed once by the Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1533 (2004) and the Director of Save Act Mine.

In her briefings to the Council, the Special Representative provided updates about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Mission’s activities and the overall conditions in the country. She also reported about the volatile political situation which resulted in President Tshisekedi’s announcement of the end of the ruling coalition in December 2020, as well as the actions undertaken by the Mission to encourage representatives of political forces and civil society to resolve their differences through dialogue and avoid any actions that could incite

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78 For more information on the procedure and working methods developed during the COVID-19 pandemic, see part II.
79 Council members held a closed videoconference on 2 December 2020 in connection with the item entitled “Meeting of the Security Council with the troop-and police-contributing countries pursuant to resolution 1353 (2001), annex II, sections A and B”; see A/75/2, part II, chap. 22.
80 See A/75/2, part II, chap. 12. See also S/2020/258.
82 See S/2020/598.
violence.\textsuperscript{83} She cautioned that the risk of politicking and positioning ahead of the 2023 elections would become the overriding focus, to the exclusion of the governance reforms and stabilization measures that the country needed.\textsuperscript{84} She also addressed the continuing security challenges faced by the country, in particular in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, noting that the protection of civilians through an integrated approach remained a central priority for MONUSCO. She also noted that some of the most serious challenges affecting the Democratic Republic of the Congo — from the presence of foreign armed groups to the illegal exploitation of, and trafficking in, mineral resources — required regional and international efforts to achieve sustainable solutions. In that regard, she informed the Council that the Mission would continue to work closely with the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes region to support the Government in that respect, as one of the constituents of the United Nations Great Lakes regional stabilization strategy as well as with other regional organizations. In her briefings, the Special Representative also referred to the joint strategy on the progressive and phased drawdown of MONUSCO, shared with the Council by the Secretary-General on 26 October 2020,\textsuperscript{85} representing a common vision for the gradual, responsible and sustainable drawdown and exit of the Mission.\textsuperscript{86}

Council members discussed the political developments in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in light of the tensions within the ruling coalition, violations of human rights, the volatile security conditions, particularly in the eastern provinces of the country, the deteriorating humanitarian situation, compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic, the importance of regional cooperation, as well as the phased drawdown of MONUSCO.

Regarding the political developments, several Council members called on the Congolese political actors to resolve their differences peacefully and to reduce tensions within the ruling coalition through dialogue.\textsuperscript{87} With regard to the human rights situation in the country, Council

\textsuperscript{83} See S/PV.8778.

\textsuperscript{84} See S/2020/987.

\textsuperscript{85} S/2020/1041.

\textsuperscript{86} See S/PV.8778.

\textsuperscript{87} See S/2020/598, Russian Federation, South Africa (also on behalf of Niger, Tunisia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines) and Viet Nam; S/2020/987, South Africa (also on behalf of Niger, Tunisia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines); S/PV.8778, Germany, Dominican Republic; Russian Federation, China and South Africa (also on behalf of Niger, Tunisia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines).
members were concerned about violations and abuses, including cases of sexual, gender-based violence, and violence against children. In that context, some called for accountability and fight against impunity, strengthening of institutions and continued efforts by the Government to improve the overall human rights environment.\textsuperscript{88}

On the humanitarian front, Council members were concerned about the worsening situation intensified by violence and further compounded by flooding, the epidemics of Ebola, measles and cholera, as well as the COVID-19 pandemic.\textsuperscript{89} In that regard, the representative of Germany noted that the most vulnerable groups – women, children and internally displaced persons – were the hardest hit by the multiple factors affecting the humanitarian situation.\textsuperscript{90}

Regarding the security situation, Council members expressed concern over the continuing volatile conditions in the eastern parts of the country, condemning attacks on civilians, MONUSCO and the Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo (FARDC). They also noted the importance of security sector reform and the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process. Several members also voiced their support for the Secretary-General’s call for a global ceasefire and regretted the lack of response to it by the armed groups in the country.\textsuperscript{91} Council members also discussed the role and the capacity of the MONUSCO Force Intervention Brigade in addressing the threat posed by the armed groups.\textsuperscript{92} In that regard, some members asserted the importance of improving the efficiency of the Brigade through its reconfiguration and prompt implementation of mandated reforms, such as the incorporation of

\textsuperscript{88} See S/2020/598, Dominican Republic, Estonia, France and Germany; S/2020/987, Estonia, France, Germany, United Kingdom and United States; S/PV.8778, France, United States, Germany, Dominican Republic, United Kingdom and Estonia.

\textsuperscript{89} See S/2020/598, Belgium, Dominican Republic, France, Germany, Indonesia, South Africa (also on behalf of Niger, Tunisia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines), United Kingdom and Viet Nam; S/2020/987, France, Germany, Indonesia, Russian Federation, South Africa (also on behalf of Niger, Tunisia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines), Viet Nam; S/PV.8778, France, Viet Nam, Indonesia, Germany, Dominican Republic, China, South Africa (speaking also on behalf of Niger, Tunisia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines).

\textsuperscript{90} See S/2020/598 and S/2020/987.

\textsuperscript{91} See S/2020/598, Germany, Indonesia, Russian Federation and United Kingdom; S/2020/987, Estonia, Indonesia, Russian Federation and Viet Nam.

\textsuperscript{92} See S/2020/598, Belgium, Russian Federation and South Africa (also on behalf of Niger, Tunisia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines) and United Kingdom; S/2020/987, Estonia, France, Russian Federation, South Africa (also on behalf of Niger, Tunisia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines), United Kingdom and United States; S/PV.8778, France, United States, Russian Federation, United Kingdom, China and South Africa (also on behalf of Niger, Tunisia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines).
additional quick-reaction forces. The representative of South Africa, speaking also on behalf of Niger, Tunisia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, noted that the Brigade required the continued support of the Council and needed to be fully trained to remain effective in addressing the threat against the civilian population in the eastern part of the country. With regard to MONUSCO’s drawdown, some Council members affirmed the need to take into account the situation on the ground, with the three African members of the Council and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines expressing concern over the prospect of a hastened and rushed drawdown.

Council members also discussed the importance of regional cooperation in tackling a multiplicity of challenges facing the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the broader region. Several members stressed the need for regional collaboration in countering illicit exploitation of natural resources and were encouraged by the efforts of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes region, alongside MONUSCO, in pursuing a regional strategy in that regard. They further welcomed the continued commitment of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) to assisting the Democratic Republic of the Congo in achieving sustainable peace, security and stability, as well as the cooperation between the African Union and the United Nations in this context.

In 2020, Council members also discussed the work of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1533 (2004). On 2 June 2020, the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo submitted its final report, concluding that despite relative political stability and significant changes in the command structures of the Congolese security forces, serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law remained widespread in

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93 See S/2020/987, France, United Kingdom and United States; S/PV.8778, France, United States, Germany, Russian Federation, United Kingdom and South Africa (also on behalf of Niger, Tunisia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines).
95 See S/2020/598, Russian Federation and South Africa (also on behalf of Niger, Tunisia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines); S/2020/987, Russian Federation and South Africa (also on behalf of Niger, Tunisia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines).
96 For more information on the situation in the Great Lakes region, see part I, sect. 3.
97 See S/2020/598, France, Germany and South Africa (also on behalf of Niger, Tunisia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines), United Kingdom and Viet Nam.
98 See S/2020/987, South Africa (also on behalf of Niger, Tunisia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines); S/PV.8778, Dominican Republic, Belgium, Russian Federation and South Africa (also on behalf of Niger, Tunisia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines).
that area.\footnote{Letter dated 2 June 2020 from the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2020/482).} On 25 June 2020, the Council unanimously adopted resolution \textbf{2528 (2020)}, renewing until 1 July 2021 the sanctions measures as set out in resolution \textbf{2293 (2016)} and extending until 1 August 2021 the mandate of the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo as set forth in resolution \textbf{2360 (2017)}.\footnote{Resolution \textbf{2528 (2020)}, paras. 1 and 3. For more information on the mandate of the Committee and the Group of Experts, see part IX, sect. I.B.} Furthermore, on 6 October 2020, Council members held a videoconference at which the Chair of the Committee provided a briefing to Council members covering the work of the Committee during the previous 12 months.\footnote{See \textit{S/2020/987}.} Further to the briefing, the representative of France noted that the Committee could do more to address violations of human rights and international humanitarian law by, inter alia, making additional designations. The representative of the Russian Federation affirmed that the restrictions imposed on the country should under no circumstance negatively affect the efficiency of the military operations conducted by the Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo (FARDC) against armed groups. The representative of the United States viewed appropriate, targeted and effective sanctions as an essential tool against actors and entities that undermined the peace and security of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In addition, the representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo reiterated his delegation’s appeal to the international community through the General Assembly for appropriate, targeted and effective sanctions against armed groups, networks and other accomplices, which, through their harmful activities, were destroying the Government’s efforts aimed at conservation and the sustainable management of biodiversity and the protected areas located in the east of his country.

On 18 December 2020, the Council adopted resolution \textbf{2556 (2020)}, under Chapter VII of the Charter, with the abstention of the Russian Federation. By this resolution, the Council extended the mandate of the Mission and the Force Intervention Brigade for one year until 20 December 2021.\footnote{Resolution \textbf{2556 (2020)}, para. 22.} The Council reiterated MONUSCO’s strategic priorities, mandating it to focus on protecting civilians and supporting the stabilization and the strengthening of State
institutions and key governance and security reforms.\textsuperscript{103} The Council also authorized MONUSCO to take all necessary measures to carry out its mandate and requested the Secretary-General to immediately inform the Security Council if MONUSCO fail to do so.\textsuperscript{104} The Council further emphasized the importance of maintaining international support and engagement to respond rapidly to infectious disease outbreaks including Ebola and COVID-19.\textsuperscript{105} The Council endorse the Joint Strategy on the Progressive and Phased Drawdown of MONUSCO and the broad parameters of MONUSCO’s transition.\textsuperscript{106} Furthermore, it requested the Secretary-General to present to the Council no later than September 2021 a transition plan on the basis of the Joint Strategy defining the practical modalities of the transfer of tasks to the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the United Nations Country Team and other stakeholders.\textsuperscript{107} In explaining the abstention, the permanent mission of the Russian Federation submitted that it could not agree with the new wording of the paragraphs on international humanitarian assistance proposed by the authors of the draft resolution, which diluted the relevant United Nations guiding principles contained in General Assembly resolution \textit{46/182}. The statement further added that the guiding principles captured the imperative to ensure respect for the sovereignty of States recipients of humanitarian aid, which needed to be duly reflected in documents of the Security Council.\textsuperscript{108}

\begin{table}
\caption{Meetings: The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo}
\label{table:1}
\begin{tabular}{|l|l|l|l|l|l|}
\hline
Meeting and date & Sub-item & Other documents & Rule 37 invitations & Rule 39 and other invitations & Speakers & Decisions and vote (for-against-abstaining) \\
\hline
S/PV.8778 7 December 2020 & Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Organization Stabilization & Democratic Republic of the Congo & Special Representative of the Secretory-General and Head of the United Nations Organization & All invitees and 12 Council members\textsuperscript{b} & All invitees \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{table}

\textsuperscript{103} Ibid., para. 24. For more information concerning the mandate of MONUSCO, see part X, sect. I. For further information on past mandates of MONUSCO, see previous Supplements covering the period 2010-2019.\textsuperscript{104} Resolution \textit{2556 (2020)}, para. 27. For further information concerning the decisions of the Council relating to Article 42 of the Charter, see part VII, sect. IV.A.\textsuperscript{105} Resolution \textit{2556 (2020)}, para. 37.\textsuperscript{106} Ibid., para. 49.\textsuperscript{107} Ibid., para. 50.\textsuperscript{108} See \textit{S/2020/1265}. Part I – Overview of Security Council Activities in the Maintenance of International Peace and Security \textit{Repertoire website:} \url{http://www.un.org/en/securitycouncil/repertoire}
Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (S/2020/1150) | Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

**a** The Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo participated in the meeting via videoconference.

**b** Belgium, China, Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Indonesia, Russian Federation, South Africa (also on behalf of Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Tunisia), United Kingdom, United States and Viet Nam.

### Table 2

**Videoconferences: The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Videoconference date</th>
<th>Videoconference record</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining) and record of written procedure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25 June 2020</td>
<td>S/2020/598</td>
<td>Letter dated 29 June 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 October 2020</td>
<td>S/2020/987</td>
<td>Letter dated 8 October 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*For: Belgium, China, Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Indonesia, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, Tunisia, United Kingdom, United States and Viet Nam; Against: None; Abstaining: Russian Federation.*