

Issue Brief

Renewing MONUSCO's Mandate: What Role Beyond the Elections?

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Executive Summary

As they prepare to discuss the renewal of MONUSCO's mandate six months ahead of general elections in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), the members of the UN Security Council are facing a dilemma. Should they limit the role of MONUSCO to the continued protection of civilians in eastern Congo, as agreed with President Joseph Kabila, or should they expand its mandate in an attempt to enforce democratic principles before the elections at the risk of confronting the incumbent regime? This issue brief argues that MONUSCO should be limited to a technical role in the election—as requested by the Congolese authorities—but only on the condition that the international community reengages President Kabila in a frank political dialogue on long-term democratic governance reforms.

The current security situation does not allow for MONUSCO's reconfiguration or drawdown as of yet. As challenging as it is for the UN mission to improve significantly the protection of civilians (PoC) in eastern DRC, the Congolese security forces are not yet ready to take over MONUSCO's security role. Sustaining security in the east without the UN will first necessitate further strengthening of national PoC capacities through a renewed partnership on the extension of state authority in eastern DRC and security-sector reform (SSR). Real stability and economic development in the whole country will require key policy decisions by Kinshasa to improve Congolese institutions over the long term.

However, the leadership of MONUSCO doesn't have the political leverage necessary to address successfully these challenges with the Congolese president. The Security Council, the African Union, and the EU should meaningfully engage the Congolese regime on the protection of civilians. But the international community can also help to encourage broad-based democratic reform. The international community can best support MONUSCO not by further expanding its mandate in the context of the upcoming elections, but rather by complementing the work of the mission in reengaging the Congolese authorities in a united and focused manner by (1) ensuring the holding of reasonably free and fair elections and (2) pushing for long-term institutional reforms.

Introduction

This month, the United Nations Security Council is considering the renewal of the mandate of MONUSCO, the United Nations Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). It is doing so as new presidential

and parliamentary elections are being planned for November 28, 2011, five years after the country's first free-and-fair elections, which were made possible by the strong and unified involvement of the international community. The incumbent President, Joseph Kabila, is running again. This time around, the Congolese authorities intend to play a leadership role in organizing, running, and funding the new cycle of elections, as a matter of national sovereignty. They requested that the UN only provide limited technical and logistical support to the electoral commission.

In November 2009, President Kabila publicly called for the UN peacekeepers to start withdrawing ahead of Congo's fiftieth anniversary of independence in June 2010. He argued that the stability of the DRC had largely improved since most former rebels had integrated into the national army (*Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo* [FARDC]) and Kinshasa and Kigali had agreed to dismantle the remaining militias in the Kivus. In his view, UN troops were only playing a limited role in securing the country.

The UN Security Council resisted this call to close down the peacekeeping mission on the basis that more than 1.5 million people were still displaced because of insecurity in eastern DRC. An agreement was eventually reached to keep the UN mission in Congo—MONUC would become MONUSCO, the "S" standing for stabilization—under a completely reworked mandate, setting benchmarks to determine whether conditions on the ground were favorable for a further drawdown of the UN mission.¹ After more than a decade of operations, the issue of the withdrawal of the blue helmets had however been raised and thus such a demand could be reiterated.²

When discussing the renewal of MONUSCO's mandate during such an important time for the DRC, the members of the Security Council will have to consider the two challenges of democratic elections and security in eastern Congo together. MONUSCO resources are in high demand to

protect civilians in eastern Congo on a daily basis. Adding new tasks for the UN mission in relation to the elections would represent an additional burden for the peacekeepers. The risk is that pushing for the UN to play a greater role in the elections would displease President Kabila. Not only would the Congolese government refuse, but this would reopen discussions of an early MONUSCO departure.

On the other hand, the creation of the UN mission in Congo during the second Congolese War of 1998-2003 was based on the assessment that long-term stability in Congo requires the building of a functioning state that serves and protects its citizens, and on the consolidation of democracy to allow for political competition without violence. Many of the institutional reforms envisaged in the 2006 Congolese constitution have however not yet been enacted, including the decentralization that should have provided better governance and checks and balances.³

This issue brief argues that as challenging as it is for the UN mission to improve significantly the protection of civilians (PoC) in eastern DRC, the Congolese security forces are not yet ready to take over MONUSCO's security role. Sustaining security in the east without the UN will first necessitate further strengthening of national PoC through a renewed partnership on the extension of state authority in eastern DRC and through security-sector reform (SSR), accompanied by key policy decisions by Kinshasa. This issue brief also makes recommendations on how the international community can best support long-term stability in the DRC, not by further expanding MONUSCO's mandate in the context of the upcoming elections, but rather by complementing the work of the mission in reengaging the Congolese authorities in a united and focused manner on a few key issues. The international effort to consolidate democracy and develop the Congo must endure long after these elections.

1 See UN Security Council Resolution 1925 (May 28, 2010), UN Doc. S/RES/1925, points 6 and 7.

2 The UN peacekeeping mission in the DRC (MONUC) was first authorized on February 24, 2000, in UN Security Council Resolution 1291.

3 The Congolese Constitution of the Third Republic was approved through a referendum on December 18, 2005, and promulgated on February 18, 2006.

The Protection of Civilians

MONUSCO protects civilians, but Congolese institutions are unprepared to take over its security role in eastern DRC.

A CHALLENGING PROTECTION-OF-CIVILIANS MANDATE

The UN mission in the DRC was established on February 24, 2000, under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, as MONUC: *Mission de l'Organisation des Nations Unies en République Démocratique du Congo*. Following a dramatic standoff in late 2008 between rebels and the Congolese army in the province of North Kivu, in which both sides deliberately killed civilians, the Council decided on an ambitious mandate for peacekeepers. Under Resolution 1856 of December 22, 2008, MONUC troops would “protect civilians under imminent threat of physical violence ... emanating from any of the parties engaged in the conflict” and the protection of civilians (PoC) would become the highest priority for the mission.⁴ In fact, the Council put the peacekeepers in a complex situation, as it clearly envisaged that they would be compelled in specific circumstances to stop the military of the host country from committing abuses.

During much of 2009, MONUC supported the FARDC in conducting Operation Kimia II to dismantle the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR)—a Rwandan Hutu militia comprising members involved in the genocide of 1994. Kimia II, rather than improving the security situation for the populations in the provinces of North and South Kivu, was marked by the deterioration of humanitarian conditions and widespread human rights violations committed by both rebels and regular forces.⁵ Alerted about the legal risks of blue helmets being complicit in crimes committed

by Congolese soldiers, the Security Council voted for a new mandate under Resolution 1906 of December 23, 2009, setting strict conditions for the vetting of senior Congolese officers and participating in joint planning before providing military assistance to the FARDC.⁶

This “conditionality” policy implanted under the new anti-FDLR operation, “Amani Leo,” launched in January 2010, did not prove effective in reducing violations, but instead led to less UN monitoring. FARDC organized military operations outside of the frame imposed by MONUC and carried them out on a unilateral basis without UN control.⁷ This was partly as a result of a cumbersome screening process for battalion commanders, less than 10 percent of whom passed. This was also due to the limited scope of the vetting process as the conditionality policy was not intended to address the issue of impunity within the FARDC, which was first and foremost the responsibility of the Congolese authorities.

The heavy sentences given by the Congolese justice system to eleven members of the FARDC, including a lieutenant-colonel, whose troops attacked a village and raped more than thirty-five women on January 1, 2011, was a positive—if modest—step in the fight against impunity. However, given the significant amount of international support provided for this highly symbolic trial,⁸ it is unlikely to be a sustainable strategy in the future. General Bosco Ntaganda, who continued holding the position of deputy commander for Amani Leo, is the subject of an arrest warrant from the International Criminal Court (ICC) for war crimes.⁹ Kinshasa still refuses to enforce this arrest warrant, in much the same way it has refused to confront other senior FARDC officers who used to be rebels, in the fear that they would reconstitute illegal armed groups.

4 See UN Security Council Resolution 1856 (December 22, 2008), UN Doc. S/RES/1856, point 3.

5 Human Rights Watch, “Eastern DR Congo: Surge in Army Atrocities—UN Peacekeeping Force Knowingly Supports Abusive Military Operations,” November 2, 2009.

6 See UN Security Council Resolution 1906 (December 23, 2009), UN Doc. S/RES/1906, points 22 and 23.

7 Final report of the group of experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo (UN Doc. S/2010/596) prepared pursuant to paragraph 6 of Security Council Resolution 1896 (2009), November 29, 2010.

8 The mobile court was paid for by George Soros' Open Society Institute and aided by several other organizations, including the American Bar Association, Lawyers Without Borders, and MONUSCO, which provided helicopters and security.

9 This arrest warrant was issued in August 2006 for war crimes committed in the Congolese district of Ituri in 2002 and 2003.

RECENT INNOVATIONS BY THE UN MISSION

Powerless to address impunity in the FARDC,¹⁰ MONUC—which became MONUSCO in July 2010—focused its resources on preventing human rights violations. This approach consisted of a number of tactical innovations. Internally, the mission developed better civilian-military operational guidance on the PoC mandate. Externally, it improved communication channels with the local population and developed early-warning systems.

The blue helmets used a system of area prioritization that was established on the basis of recommendations from humanitarians and development agencies, and from feedback from multidisciplinary Joint Protection Teams (JPTs) and Joint Monitoring Teams (JMTs) deployed to the field.¹¹ UN military contingents displayed greater willingness to stretch out to Temporary Operating Bases and relied increasingly on Congolese Community Liaison Interpreters (CLIs)—recently renamed Community Liaison Assistants—and community-alert networks (including the distribution of cell phones and high-frequency radios), in planning their patrols and in responding to incidents.¹²

Attacks by illegal armed groups on civilians in Kibua-Mpofi in North Kivu on July 30–August 2, 2010, and the abuses committed by FARDC elements in Fizi town in South Kivu on January 1–2, 2011, however, demonstrate the limits of this tactical approach.¹³ The number of persons displaced because of the insecurity in eastern DRC remains particularly high.¹⁴ According to security briefings given by OCHA in Goma, humanitarian access has deteriorated during the last year, particularly in North and South Kivu, where attacks on aid workers have intensified. The mere presence of peacekeepers has unfortunately not deterred

FARDC and armed groups from abusing civilians to assert their control, including with recurrent sexual and gender-based violence.

Still, the 21,000 military, police, and civilian peacekeepers in eastern DRC are undisputedly saving lives. Despite mobility remaining a serious challenge for the force, and mission resources being cut,¹⁵ the peacekeepers make it possible for humanitarian workers to continue operating in dangerous areas. The peacekeepers also provide invaluable information on developments on the ground. The UN mission in Congo has been repeatedly tested and has learned from the challenge of ensuring PoC. It became a laboratory for the implementation of the PoC mandate, but new tactics—largely unsustainable as mission resources dry out—will never substitute for the primary responsibility of the Congolese state to protect its people.

CONGOLESE INSTITUTIONS ARE NOT YET READY TO TAKE OVER MONUSCO'S SECURITY ROLE

Under UN Security Council Resolution 1925, the Congolese authorities and the UN agreed on setting benchmarks and to jointly assess whether conditions on the ground were favorable for MONUSCO to draw down. It lists the main conditions for reconfiguring MONUSCO, including “the completion of the ongoing military operations in the Kivus and Orientale Province” and “an improved capacity of the Government of the DRC to effectively protect the population through the establishment of sustainable security forces with a view to progressively take over MONUSCO’s security role.”¹⁶ With persisting insecurity in eastern DRC, former armed groups imperfectly integrated into the national army, and the slow restoration of state authority (particularly police deployments) in eastern DRC, Congolese institutions are not yet ready to take over

10 The November 29, 2010, report to the Security Council from its group of experts on sanctions (UN Doc. S/2010/596) also discussed the illegal exploitation of natural resources by armed groups and CNDP elements integrated into the FARDC.

11 Joint Monitoring Team (JMTs), unlike JPTs, were deployed permanently, but will leave prematurely this June due to lack of a new funding source.

12 Patrols have included the escorting of women from villages to markets and farmers to their fields in unsafe areas.

13 MONUSCO-OHCHR, “Rapport préliminaire de la mission d’enquête du Bureau Conjoint des Nations Unies aux Droits de l’Homme sur les viols massifs et autres violations des droits de l’homme commis par une coalition de groupes armés sur l’axe Kibua-Mpofi, en territoire de Walikale, province du Nord-Kivu, du 30 juillet au 2 août 2010,” September 24, 2010.

14 The UN Office for the Humanitarian for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) registered at the end of the first quarter of 2011 689,300 internally displaced persons (IDPs) in South Kivu, 557,023 IDPs in North Kivu, and 436,982 IDPs in Orientale Province. See OCHA, “Humanitarian Situation in the DRC: Information Brief to the Press,” April 20, 2011.

15 See United Nations, *Report to the Secretary-General on the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo*, UN Doc. S/2011/20, January 17, 2011, para. 83.

16 See UN Security Council Resolution 1925 (May 28, 2010), UN Doc. S/RES/1925, points 6 and 7.

MONUSCO's role.

Insecurity is still widespread in eastern Congo. The CNDP and large parts of PARECO¹⁷—the largest armed groups in North and South Kivu—integrated into the national army in 2009 to fight the FDLR and remaining Mayi-Mayi militias. These former rebels however maintain their previous chain of command and political agenda. As a direct result of military operations and of a temporary mining ban, integrated officers of the CNDP control rich mineral sites and refuse to be redeployed in other provinces of the DRC. In Orientale Province, the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), led by the Ugandan warlord Joseph Kony, continues to carry out gruesome attacks against civilians while abducting children and enrolling them by force into its ranks.¹⁸ Local community leaders in the eastern DRC are still raising the alarm over poor security conditions, in some cases complaining about the lack of attention given by the national authorities.¹⁹ Also, land disputes and tensions over the representation of ethnic minorities in the Kivus could be exacerbated ahead of the elections, and they could get even worse if the return of more than 200,000 Congolese refugees from Burundi, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda is mismanaged.²⁰

Military operations targeting the foreign militias in eastern DRC have lost momentum over the last few months. The DDRRR program²¹ managed by MONUSCO has been facing increasing difficulty in convincing the most radical remaining Rwandan FDLR elements to surrender; and, since the beginning of the anti-FDLR operations, the militia

compensated for its loss with steady recruitment of young Congolese to replenish its ranks. In 2011, 40 percent of the group's combatants disarmed by the UN have been Congolese—70 percent of whom were children. The DDRRR program is, however, still needed as it continues to register some success in its targeting of FDLR officers since 2010, with nineteen officers demobilized in the first quarter of 2011.²²

At the height of the military operations in eastern DRC in early 2010, more than 60,000 Congolese soldiers, organized in battalions with disparate military capabilities, were concentrated near the most populated areas in the provinces of North and South Kivu. In October 2010, the FARDC started reconfiguring their forces in the Kivus into 1,200-soldier "regiments," which were redeployed to attend a three-month training program.²³ MONUSCO and other international partners were not informed of the details of this decision. Although these sudden movements of soldiers left civilians at the mercy of armed groups and bandits in some areas, the redeployment could contribute to weakening the parallel command structures run by integrated elements and offer an opportunity to end Amani Leo operations. In turn, this may finally reduce FARDC presence in an overly militarized eastern DRC. It is however unlikely that this initiative can be imposed on former rebels before the elections, during a period for which stability is paramount for the government in Kinshasa.

The demilitarization of eastern DRC needs to be combined with the effective restoration of state authority, particularly through the empowerment

17 National Congress for the Defense of the People (CNDP). The Coalition of Patriots in the Congolese Resistance (PARECO) are mostly Hutus.

18 OCHA established that the first quarter of 2011 has witnessed a significant increase in the number of LRA incidents in Orientale Province. See OCHA, "LRA Regional Update: DRC, CAR and South Sudan: January-March 2011," April 7, 2011, available at www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4da28f52.html. For more on the LRA, see Ronald R. Atkinson, "From Uganda to the Congo and Beyond: Pursuing the Lord's Resistance Army," New York: International Peace Institute, December 2009.

19 OCHA observes that the LRA continues to operate in Oriental Province, forcing 327,000 Congolese people to live as internally displaced people in the districts of Haut and Bas Uele. In a letter read in all the churches of the territory of Dungu on March 20, 2011, the bishop of Dungu criticized the government for minimizing the threat posed by the LRA. See OCHA, "LRA Regional Update"; and hear Radio Okapi, "L'évêque de Dungu appelle le gouvernement à agir contre la LRA," March 21, 2011.

20 Tripartite agreements between these four countries, the DRC, and the UN refugee Agency (UNHCR) for the return of refugees have already been signed, but the political and security implications of such demographic movements in the context of ongoing intercommunity tensions are still overlooked or misunderstood by Kinshasa and international partners. See International Crisis Group, "Congo: No Stability in Kivu Despite a Rapprochement with Rwanda," *Africa Report* N°165, November 16, 2010, pp. 17 and 18.

21 MONUC's DDRRR campaign started in December 2001. DDRRR stands for disarmament, demobilization, repatriation, resettlement, and reintegration, and is targeted at members of foreign armed groups, including FDLR and the LRA.

22 Analysis based on MONUSCO DDRRR statistics, updated on April 7, 2011. In 2010, DDRRR was handling an average of 160 Rwandan FDLR combatants per month, who had surrendered because of a combination of military pressure and information campaigns. In the first quarter of 2011, only 260 Rwandans FDLR were disarmed and demobilized.

23 So far, five regiments in North Kivu and six in South Kivu were formed as part of the first phase. A second phase of restructuration into regiments should start in May 2011, which would include ex-CNDP units from the twenty-second and twenty-third sectors of Masisi highlands, and will therefore be a test for ex-CNDP units loyal to Bosco Ntaganda, some of which have in the past deserted when the government attempted to rotate them away from their strongholds.

of an effective police force. These objectives are already included in the existing UN Security Council Resolution 1925, and should be reinforced. But in order for MONUSCO to be more effective in supporting the Congolese authorities taking on their responsibility to protect, it will require the international community to reengage Congolese authorities at the highest level on key policy decisions.

The Elections, the Mandate, and the International Community

While MONUSCO supports the elections and continues to support national POC, the international community must reengage Kinshasa on long-term governance issues that have lost momentum.

MONUSCO'S SUPPORT ROLE IN THE ELECTIONS

The Congolese National Independent Electoral Commission (CENI) chaired by Bishop Ngoy Mulunda, a close ally of Joseph Kabila, has set the date of the presidential elections for November 28, 2011. This upcoming presidential election could be of historical significance. For the first time, an incumbent Congolese head of state could be defeated at the ballot box and have to relinquish power through a democratic process. This past year, however, President Kabila made strategic decisions that make his defeat unlikely. Without crossing the red lines that would have triggered strong condemnations from the international community, he has consolidated his power and transformed the electoral system in his favor.

UN experts have consistently worked to support democratic reforms in the Congo through the implementation of the 2006 constitution.²⁴ In particular, decentralization and local elections were supposed to contribute to a stronger system of checks and balances and better governance. The constitutional deadline of May 2010 to implement decentralization was not respected. The local elections that should have begun in 2007 have been postponed to 2013. On January 15, 2011, the parlia-

ment approved the constitutional changes pushed forward by the office of the president. It has de facto changed the Congolese system from a decentralized, semi-presidential regime with a two-round presidential vote, to something closer to a centralized presidential system with a one-round presidential vote.²⁵ This new configuration doesn't make the DRC an easier country to govern over the long run, but it provides significant electoral advantages to the incumbent president.

The international donors, who are still providing half of the \$6 billion national budget, have witnessed this development but have not voiced strong criticisms. They may have decided at the time that maintaining good relations with the Congolese leadership and steady financial support were needed for the institutions to function and for the security in the east not to deteriorate further. Today, the leadership of MONUSCO does not have the necessary leverage to convince the Congolese government to establish democratic checks and balances or to provide guarantees that the next elections will be free, fair, and transparent. Since MONUSCO's presence is still needed to protect civilians in eastern DRC, the UN mission is not well suited to take on greater political responsibilities through a new mandate.

However, UN peacekeepers must not appear to undermine the organization of the vote. MONUSCO should focus its election-related support on two key aspects: First, it should provide logistical and technical support to the CENI in the preparation and conduct of the upcoming elections, as requested by the government of the DRC. Second, MONUSCO's civilian experts should closely monitor the respect for civil rights, including the freedom of expression and assembly, by all parties and the media. In addition, an electoral code of conduct should be clearly established and then respected by all. Neutral observation, systematic reporting, and possible early warning by the UN mission will be especially useful if they support a higher-level mechanism for the international community to engage Congolese authorities on these issues.

Back in 2006, European troops were temporarily

²⁴ The Congolese Constitution of the Third Republic was approved through a referendum on December 18, 2005, and promulgated on February 18, 2006.

²⁵ Most significantly, the President, who will now be elected through a one-round vote, can now appoint the Provincial Governors of his choice. See law 11/02 of January 20, 2011.

deployed in Kinshasa under EUFOR RDC to help secure the elections, but no similar mission is currently foreseen for the upcoming polls. At present, with its forces mostly occupied dealing with continuing violence against civilians in eastern DRC, MONUSCO will not have the capacity to contribute significantly to securing the vote country-wide. It must still offer its protection to key actors in the elections, such as figures of the Congolese civil society, international monitors and contestants in the elections.

THE IMPORTANCE OF INCREASING SUPPORT TO NATIONAL POC IN THE MONUSCO MANDATE

UN Security Council Resolution 1925 provides a useful framework for preparing for the transition to a future MONUSCO drawdown, by supporting the Congolese authorities in assuming their primary responsibility of ensuring the security of civilians. This is primarily through the UN support to the national stabilization program for eastern DRC (STAREC/ISSSS)²⁶ and the government's justice and security-sector reform (SSR) efforts. For MONUSCO's support to these two closely related essential dimensions of national PoC to be effective, Kinshasa authorities must match this support with key policy decisions, which the international community will need to continue advocating even after the elections. For this reason, the reestablishment of a long-term constructive partnership between donors and the government of the DRC is critical.

Infrastructures in the DRC and particularly in the east remain largely insufficient despite the national program of reconstruction known as the "Five Chantiers."²⁷ International assistance for further infrastructure (roads and buildings) and capacity-building works should be conditioned on key decisions by Kinshasa, including on deployment of police²⁸ and administration to the east under

STAREC/ISSSS. It is essential that bilateral donors also coordinate their investments within the framework of the existing ISSSS. As an illustration, under the stabilization program more than twenty-five police stations have already been built along six priority roads.²⁹ However, as of April 2011, only four of these police stations were fully staffed.³⁰ This is not only the result of FARDC reorganization rendering areas unsafe for police, but also of a dispute among the regular territorial police, the 300 policemen deployed from Kinshasa, and the rebels who were integrated into the security forces. As evidenced during the second STAREC/ISSSS Partners meeting held in Goma on February 15, 2011, MONUSCO, the donors, and the government must work together on resolving these issues.³¹

The lack of comprehensive security-sector reform (or, as a secondary option, a reform program for justice and SSR in eastern DRC) and donor coordination in SSR are the biggest impediments to the creation of conditions that would allow Congolese institutions to effectively take over MONUSCO's security role. The new MONUSCO mandate must encourage in stronger terms the government of the DRC to launch a comprehensive program of security-sector reform, and it should call on bilateral donors to support this reform in a coordinated manner. The new resolution could also call for the establishment of a joint-steering committee on SSR involving DRC authorities, donors, and civil society. This would not only help ensure continued donor support, but also usefully encourage the government of the DRC in initiating the important reforms that Kinshasa has so far refused.³²

Indeed, neither the recent reconfiguration of the army nor the building of police stations should be mistaken for the beginning of meaningful SSR or the end of FARDC operations in the east. The problem remains a question of long-term vision and political will by Kinshasa, which gave priority

26 Stabilization and Reconstruction National Plan for eastern DRC (STAREC) of the Congolese government is supported by the International Security & Stabilization Support Strategy (ISSSS), which is funded by foreign donors.

27 See the website of Cinq Chantiers, available at www.cinqchantiers-rdc.com/English/home.php.

28 The suspension of DRC police chief General John Numbi in connection with the murder of the human rights activist Floribert Chebeya in June 2010 may however have delayed some decisions expected from Kinshasa on new police deployments.

29 One priority area is in Ituri, two in North Kivu, and three in South Kivu.

30 MONUSCO Stabilisation Support Unit (SSU) statistics. The Sake police station, north of Goma, inaugurated in November 2010, has often been presented as a success story. Of the sixty police there, forty come from the Kinshasa battalion "Tigre" and twenty others are a combination of territorial police and integrated ex-CNDP and ex-PARECO. Additional elements have since joined the police station from mining- and traffic-police branches.

31 This was the first time the government participated in such a meeting with the attendance of the Minister of Defense and former combatants. The next Partners meeting will take place in Kinshasa in May 2011.

32 United Nations, *Report of the Security Council mission to the Democratic Republic of the Congo*, UN Doc. 2010/288, May 13-16, 2010, para. 19.

to the short-term appeasement of former rebels (who were integrated into the FARDC under favorable conditions) over building a unified professional army,³³ in spite of the army reform plan presented to international partners in January 2010.³⁴ The European Union Security program (EUSEC) provides assistance to the FARDC in the field of human resources management and the payment of soldiers' salaries. It may represent the most successful attempt to date to improve transparency in the military and limit abuses of civilians. Such efforts however remain inadequate in relation to the scale of the problem. Congolese authorities have repeatedly stated that they favor bilateral arrangements to train and equip the FARDC, rather than a comprehensive reform and rebuilding of the state's security sector. The foreign nations providing military assistance to the FARDC carry an important part of responsibility in having so far accepted such an approach.³⁵

Conclusion: How the International Community Can Best Support MONUSCO

Based on the assessment of the security situation on the ground and the capacities of the UN mission presented here, the way the international community can best support MONUSCO is not by asking the Security Council to further expand its mandate for the upcoming elections. Rather, it should complement the work of the mission by reengaging the Congolese authorities in a united, consistent, and focused manner at the highest level

by (1) ensuring the holding of reasonably free and fair elections; and (2) reestablishing a long-term political dialogue that will reintroduce essential institutional reforms, such as decentralization and SSR, that are the key to durable stability and democracy beyond the elections.

First, the Contact Group on the Great Lakes³⁶ and the African Union³⁷ must deploy their own electoral monitoring missions in order to appease suspicions, help prevent and resolve difficulties that may arise during the electoral process, and assess transparently the conditions and the results of the elections. They should envisage setting an international Compact on the DRC, which would bring together all relevant actors involved in addressing the complex array of challenges that remain in Congo and which could engage Kinshasa at the highest level. Also the US and the EU should urgently consider appointing new Special Envoys to the Great Lakes region.³⁸

Second, the international community should insist that the government of the DRC implement the remaining institutional reforms as envisaged by the constitution adopted through a referendum in 2005—particularly decentralization and security-sector reform. From 2003 to 2006, in the period leading to the adoption of the new Congolese constitution, the international community united in the *Comité international d'accompagnement de la transition* (CIAT) established the strong practical connection between long-term stability in Central Africa and institutional reforms in the DRC.³⁹ This assessment is still valid today in the DRC and must be the object of a renewed political dialogue with Kinshasa, no matter who is in charge after the upcoming election.

33 See "Loi numero 10/001 du 25 janvier 2010 portant budget de l'Etat pour l'exercice 2010," Kinshasa: Congolese government, January 25, 2010, p.1.

34 See International Crisis Group, "Congo: A Stalled Democratic Agenda," *Africa Briefing* N°73, April 8, 2010, pp. 14 and 15.

35 Belgium, Angola, South Africa, China, the UK, France, and the US all provided bilateral military assistance in the last years. In November and December 2009, a Congolese force supported by Belgian military succeeded in stopping a rebellion in the Equator province that could have dangerously destabilized the northern part of DRC.

36 The Contact group is an informal discussion forum that includes representatives from the UN, the EU, the United-States, Belgium, France, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom.

37 The African Union (AU) Panel of the Wise should also engage with Kinshasa on issues of prevention, management, and resolution of election-related conflict. See Mireille Affaà-Mindzie, "Africa: Time to Take Elections Seriously," IPI, April 21, 2011, available at www.ipinst.org/news/comment-a-analysis/231-africa-time-to-take-elections-seriously.html.

38 In the second half of 2010, Howard Wolpe stepped down as US special envoy to the Great Lakes region, and former European Union special envoy to the Great Lakes region Roland Van der Geer took a new post as EU ambassador to South Africa.

39 This is in part because the government counts on governors—all from the presidential parliamentary alliance—to mitigate the frustration of the population in the eleven Congolese provinces. To maintain influence over these governors, the government postponed the implementation of those parts of the constitution establishing twenty-six provinces in May 2010, as well as a new system of distribution of tax revenues between national and provincial institutions.

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