Peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) remains precarious, with several indications of genocide and/or civil war in the past six months, and a recent surge of violence that suggests “a dramatic escalation of conflict.” Considered corrupt by many observers, the incumbent president, Joseph Kabila, continues to flouting the law in order to remain in power. Resource wealth combined with a population in poverty and human rights abuses contribute to the dense landscape of armed and criminal groups. The two most immediate threats to political and security instability are: the Government of DRC (GoDRC) disinclination—and the Commission Electorale Nationale Indépendante (CENI) inability—to establish an
electoral calendar and provide the related funding, and the alleged GoDRC attacks against registration centers and opposition groups. Spokespersons of the GoDRC suggest that elections cannot be held as expected in December 2017, but must be as late as 2018. Major considerations are:

- The UN Security Council agreed to renew the MONUSCO mandate, but reduced the number of troops authorized, during a period of increasing instability in the DRC. Relations between the DRC government and UN/MONUSCO are problematic for several reasons. Prominent among them is: the charges against MONUSCO peacekeepers for sexual violence against the population; the intransigence of President Kabila over his departure from office; and the continued atmosphere of violence against the population. United States (US) Ambassador to the United Nations (UN) recently remarked “The UN peacekeeping mission is mandated to partner with the government...In other words the UN is aiding a government that is inflicting predatory behavior against its own people. We should have the decency and common sense to end this.” MONUSCO includes a Force Intervention Brigade (FIB), representing an offensive force to stabilize the situation and protect civilians. While the FIB was intended to be a short-lived entity [and “on an exceptional basis and without creating a precedent or any prejudice” (UNSCR 2147)], its presence was extended with the 2016 mandate renewal and appears active with UNSCR 2348 (2017), the mandate renewal.

- Seven DRC military officers were arrested and charged with war crimes by a DRC investigative authority, stemming from allegations by several international organizations and other nations accusing them of “summary executions”, among other atrocities, based on a video of the same. This is the latest in a series of violent conflicts between the DRC’s forces and various opposition groups, as well as those conflicts amongst the armed groups themselves. The UN “has documented the killings of more than 280 people since July 2016” in Kasai Central province, primarily, but the violence is not confined there. The violence extends to UN and other humanitarian workers, as demonstrated by the kidnapping and deaths of two UN human rights monitors in early March 2017. The kidnapping was allegedly committed by unknown parties, yet some sources indicate the DRC military found the bodies within a day of disappearance, but did not share that information with UN authorities until several days later, implying some complicity in their initial loss.

- Peace talks aimed for political conflict resolution suffered another setback end of March when the Catholic Bishops of the National Episcopal Conference of the Congo (CENCO) announced their withdrawal as mediators: “We think that there’s no longer anything to do...We have given all our time and all our energy.” Recent attacks against church property and personnel may have contributed to their reluctance to continue the effort. CENCO brokered DRC’s late December 2016’s political transition agreement, which was designed to avoid further violence and civil war that appeared inevitable when the incumbent president, Joseph Kabila, did step aside as required by the DRC constitution. While the agreement appeared useful at the time, it encountered its first significant challenge in early February 2017, when the leading Congolese opposition figure Etienne Tshisekedi died in Brussels. A divisive figure himself, nonetheless he was serving as the president of the Rassemblement (French for “a gathering”, and a coalition of opposition groups). As president of the opposition coalition, Tshisekedi “was to lead the monitoring committee tasked with applying the deal.” His death—and the ongoing controversy of his funeral
arrangements—increased tensions in DRC. Compounding the stress, exiled Congolese opposition politician, Moïse Katumbi, plans to accompany the Tshisekedi’s body back to the DRC. He recently called for the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) bloc (which includes Angola, Rwanda and Uganda) to pressure Kabila to leave office. There is some pressure beyond the UN to apply. In the remarks following the UN Security Council’s extension of MONUSCO’s mandate, the Chair of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Ministerial Committee “warned that the Congolese Government must not use security concerns as a pretext to renego on or delay its political commitments under the 31 December 2016 agreement.”

- **$24 trillion of untapped mineral resources** also serves as a source of violence in that armed groups have the wherewithal to buy arms. While the United States (US) passed the Dodd-Frank Act legislation in 2010 to reduce the purchase of “conflict minerals,” the complex supply chains in the DRC makes obtaining certification difficult for companies that purchase resources. Therefore, multinational companies stopped buying minerals from DRC, putting many miners out of work and even driving some to join armed groups to gain a source of livelihood. Recent US Administration and Congressional discussion about the modification or suspension of the Dodd-Frank Act may further inflame violence over conflict minerals, or may ease company restrictions which will allow for improved employment of local workers.

**Mission Overview**

1. **Background.** MONUSCO took over from an earlier United Nations Organization Mission in Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) on 1 July 2010 in accordance with Security Council Resolution 1925 of 28 May 2010. Due to continuation of violence and abuses, on February 24, 2016, the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region was signed by representatives of 11 countries, the Chairs of the African Union (AU), the ICGLR, the Southern African Development Community (SADC), and the UN.

2. **Mandate.** MONUSCO’s mandate remains unique in its authorization of the FIB [simply called the Intervention Brigade in UNSCR 2348(2017)]. It is a multi-disciplinary UN presence, which directs (until 31 March 2018) the following:

The strategic priorities of MONUSCO are to contribute to the following objectives:

- Protection of civilians; and
- Support to the implementation of the 31 December 2016 agreement and the electoral process (previous mandates simply stated “support for stability”)

Specific tasks include actions in support of (new tasks in **bold**):

- Protection of Civilians
- Implementation of the 31 December 2016 agreement and Support to the Electoral Process

Moïse Katumbi was a political ally of Kabila for over a decade, serving as a governor of a province. However, he broke from his party in September 2015 when it became apparent that the president would not relinquish power. Katumbi expected to run for presidential office that November. He is popular in part to his management of the Congolese football club “TP Mazembe” which are reigning leaders of the African Champions League. He is a co-founder of Rassemblement, In May 2016, he was tried and convicted in absentia for “hiring foreign mercenaries.”
• Protection of the United Nations (personnel, facilities, and equipment)
• Stabilization and Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration
• Security Sector Reform (SSR)
• Arms Embargo
• Mining Activities
• Child Protection
• Gender, Sexual Violence, Sexual Exploitation, and Abuse
• Humanitarian Access
• Support to the Group of Experts
• **Force Effectiveness**
• Exit Strategy

Of note, paragraph 33 authorizes MONUSCO “to take all necessary measures to carry out its mandate and requests the Secretary-General to immediately inform the Security Council should the MONUSCO force or police fail to do so.” Another section directs “the deployment of rapidly deployable battalions and employment of the Intervention Brigade’s capabilities, to become more mobile, efficient and effective in implementing its mandate.”

Another resolution, **UNSCR 2293**, renewed the DRC sanctions and the mandate of the Group of Experts.

### 3. Deployment.

The Security Council established and deployed the FIB with 3000 troops within the authorized troop ceiling of 19,815 in 2013. In 2015, MONUSCO’s strength decreased by 2000 troops while sustaining the FIB. It was increased again in 2016. The revised mandate, **UNSCR 2348(2017)**, reduces the total strength yet again—perhaps in anticipation of the US’ proposed cuts to foreign aid in its next budget year. However, as the current strength has never met the authorized strength, **fewer than 500** troops will be released in reality. The new resolution also authorizes the replacement of units with “specialized” units, but it is unclear what those specialties are, should or will be.

As of December 2016, the largest **Troop Contributing Countries (TCCs)** are India (3,679) and Pakistan (3,481). The next largest group of contributing countries are: Bangladesh (1,905); South Africa (1,359); Tanzania (1,265); Nepal (1,048), and Uruguay (1,160).

The **FIB, or Intervention Brigade**, is comprised of countries from the **Southern African Development Community**, specifically Malawi, South Africa, and Tanzania. (The Tanzania peacekeepers were charged with 11 **paternity cases**, of which six are with minor children.) It consists of three infantry battalions, one artillery and one special force and Reconnaissance Company. While it is not clear what impact—if any—the reduction in troop authorization will have on the FIB, the revised mandate directs: “…offensive operations through the Intervention Brigade with the support of the whole of MONUSCO, either unilaterally or jointly with the FARDC, in a robust, highly mobile and versatile manner and in strict compliance with international law, including international humanitarian law…”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current authorization 18,316 total</th>
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<tr>
<td>16,215 military personnel</td>
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<td>660 military observers and staff officers</td>
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<tr>
<td>391 police personnel and 1,050 personnel of formed police units</td>
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<table>
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<th>Current Strength: 22,590 total</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Uniformed personnel</strong>: 18,753</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>○ Troops: 16,957</td>
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<tr>
<td>○ Military observers: 446</td>
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<tr>
<td>○ Police: 1,350</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Civilian personnel</strong>: 3,470</td>
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<tr>
<td>○ International civilians: 816</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>○ Local civilians: 2,654</td>
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The US contributes **three soldiers** to the mission. There are only **727 women** in the MONUSCO mission, or 3.8%, compared to 4.3% across all UN peace missions.

4. **Casualties.** According to the **UN Fact Sheet**, MONUSCO had 102 fatalities (over 50% includes troops) during its 16-year time frame. (It is unclear if this calculation includes the former MONUC mission.) Only 12 fatalities are listed as due “malicious acts”. This number does not apparently include a 2017 death of a South African peacekeeper. These totals also do not account for other MONUSCO casualties, either due to attack-related injuries, disease, or accidents. Nor does it include casualties engendered in the FIB’s operations against the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA).

Despite the dangerous nature of modern peacekeeping, a **recent UN casualties analysis** suggests that “overall UN fatalities are not substantively on the rise” once data is controlled for deployment numbers. Instead, “total fatality ratios for the period 1990–2011 are declining...for all three levels: the national contingent, UN mission, and global levels.”

**Situation**

5. **Drivers of Conflict.** This **generation's violence in the DRC** has origins in the 1994 Rwanda genocide and the resulting refugee crisis. The Second Congo War (1998-2003) involved DRC forces (with Angola, Namibia, and Zimbabwe allies) against Uganda and Rwanda supported rebels, with a death toll estimated as high as five million people.

In the aftermath of the Second Congo War, armed groups with varying reasons-for-being remain a significant driver to the instability and continuing violence in the DRC. However, the government still appears more concerned about its political future than in addressing the issues and concerns of the opposing parties and armed factions.

The extensive and valuable resources and minerals of the DRC—estimated to contain $24 trillion of untapped mineral resources—remain a tension point for conflict. The mineral trade provides financial means for groups to operate and buy arms. In an effort to prevent funding armed militias, the US passed legislation in 2010 to reduce the purchase of “conflict minerals.” As a result, multinational companies stopped buying minerals from the DRC, putting many miners out of work and even driving some to join armed groups to gain a source of livelihood. Rebel groups exploit the lack of control and have illicitly extracted and sold the resources to external companies to fund their own political and personal gains. It is estimated that rebel groups control more than 50% of all resource mines.

There are hundreds of thousands of internally displaced Congolese due to violence between tribes. In addition, drought and flooding contributes to both food insecurity and lack of pasture. A poorly understood concept of **Transhumance** further exacerbates conflict. Complicating any solution, government officials tend to be closer aligned to the herders than the farmers. In addition, much transhumance occurs across international borders, specifically from Tanzania, Rwanda and Burundi.

There are many drivers of conflict. Before President Kabila’s 2016 decision to remain in office, there was the 2015 **decoupage** action of the President in which he sub-divided the eleven provinces into twenty-six (a change which was set in motion in 2006 and that was supposed to have occurred by 2010). The perceived intent of **decoupage** was the dissolution of the large provincial power bases of some political rivals who “will have fewer resources at their disposal and therefore be less viable candidates at the national level.” With no planned implementation or financial assistance, the lack of election of
governors for the new provinces led the central government to appoint special commissioners as administrators—suspending the authority of the governors and assemblies. All the new appointees were political allies of President Kabila.

6. Significant Events.

a. Recent Events.

- **31 March 2017.** The UN Security Council extended the MONUSCO mandate to 31 March 2018, with a reduction of forces.
- **25 March 2017.** Over 40 DRC policemen were beheaded by a rebel group in “a dramatic escalation of conflict.”
- **13 March 2017.** Two UN experts were kidnapped by “negative” forces, according to the GoDRC.
- **17 February 2017.** CENI formally requested MONUSCO electoral support including security, logistics, and voter site coordination.
- **11 February 2017.** MONUSCO indicated concern over the violent atrocities committed by militia (including their recruitment and use of child soldiers) as well as the “disproportionate use of force” by the government’s Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo (FARDC) with unconfirmed reports of between 30 to 50 deaths resulting from these clashes.
- **9 February 2017.** Unidentified armed group attacked a hospital and killed patients and assaulted the medical staff.
- **4 January 2017.** The UN Security Council adopted a presidential statement welcoming the signing on 31 December 2016 of a comprehensive and inclusive political agreement on the electoral calendar in the DRC.
- **1 January 2017.** CENCO accord was signed by all stakeholders, allowing Kabila to remain as president with a transitional body with a new opposition prime minister. Also, Kabila agreed to leave by end of 2017, and he will not be a candidate in the next election.
- **19 December 2016.** A South African peacekeeper was killed in an attack by the Maï Maï armed group.
- **12 December 2016.** The US and EU sanctioned top officials of the regime for complicity in using deadly force on protesters.
- **27 November 2016.** President Kabila’s second (and last) term ends.
- **17 October 2016.** DRC’s constitutional court allows CENI to postpone November polls and ordered the immediate roll out of a new calendar for the next elections.
- **September 2016.** Protests prior to Kabila’s tenure expiration begin, with many dead from police engagement.
- **23 August 2016.** Election procedure talks fail after few opposition parties participate.
- **13 August 2016.** Allied Democratic Forces militia is suspected of killing of 50 civilians.
- **August 2016.** CENI cited lack of funding and delays in voter registration as the major factors behind the postponement of elections. Predicts that it will be 2018 before valid elections can be held.
- **July 2016.** Tsisekedi returned to DRC after two years in Belgium, demanding elections and Kabila’s exit.
- **June 2016.** Several opposition leaders met near Brussels create the “Rassemblement” to bring in Katumbi allies, including the G7, forming a potentially potent new opposition alliance.
- **May 2016.** Ex-Katanga Governor Moïse Katumbi declared his intention to run for president. He was tried in absentia for property fraud in June 2016 and sentenced, but allowed to leave the country for medical treatment. (Some reports indicate he was charged and sentenced for “undermining national security.”)
• **11 April 2016.** The DRC expelled an American, a respected researcher and former coordinator of the UN Panel of Experts in Congo, for his reports about massacres (led or abetted by government forces) in the Beni region of eastern Congo between October 2014 and March 2015.

• **31 March 2016.** UN extends the MONUSCO mandate for another year.

b. Upcoming Events.

• **15 June 2017.** Final report of the Group of Experts due to UNSC.

• **1 July 2017.** UNSCR 2293, with measures on arms control, expires.

• **1 August 2017.** The UNSCR mandate of the Group of Experts expires.

• **Fall 2017.** DRC national elections to be conducted.

• **31 March 2018.** MONUSCO mandate expires.

**Operational Environment (GPMESII)**

7. **Geographic.** Predominately a tropical climate, with hot and humid in equatorial river basin; cooler and drier in southern highlands; and cooler and wetter in eastern highlands. Located in central Africa, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) has a 25-mile (40-km) coastline on the Atlantic Ocean but is otherwise landlocked. It is the second largest country in Africa (after Algeria) and largest country in Sub-Saharan Africa. The capital, Kinshasa, is located on the Congo River about 320 miles (515 km) from its mouth. The largest city in central Africa, it serves as the country’s official administrative, economic, and cultural center.

The environment is a casualty of armed conflict. Poaching threatens wildlife populations; refugees and internally displace persons are all responsible for significant deforestation and soil erosion in attempts to create shelters and bare-subsistence farming.

8. **Political.** Suffrage is both universal and compulsory, for all citizens 18 years of age and older. The DRC is a semi-presidential republic, led by President Joseph Kabila, with a civil law system based on Belgian Law as well as tribal law. The president is directly elected by simple majority popular vote for a 5-year term (eligible for a second term), however, the last election was on 28 November 2011 with Kabila receiving 49% of the votes in a process “marred by serious…irregularities”.

The Senate last held elections in January 2007; and the National Assembly last held elections in November 2011 (with the presidential elections).

There are approximately 278 parties registered with the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Many—if not most—of the political parties’ platforms are based in tribal and ethnic issues; many—if not most—of the parties have armed groups associated with them. President Joseph Kabila’s People’s Party for Reconstruction
and Democracy (PPRD) is the largest in parliament. The “G7” political opposition alliance includes the Union Nationale des Fédéralistes Congolais (UNAFEC), the National Union of Democrats and Federalists (UNADEF) and Avenir du Congo (ACO). A relatively new opposition coalition is the “Rassemblement”, or "Rally". Co-founded with the late Etienne Tshisekedi, then a leader of the Union for Democracy and Social Progress (UDPS), and former Katanga Governor Moïse Katumbi, the new coalition was another attempt to develop a cohesive strategy to oust President Joseph Kabila.

Joseph Kabila received military training in China and fought alongside his father, Laurent Kabila, in a 1997 coup against Mobutu Sese Seko, who ruled in the DRC as a dictator for more than 20 years. Laurent Kabila took power; Joseph became president in 2001 when his father was assassinated. He was formally elected in 2006, and secured another term in controversial elections in 2011.

While he initially had allies among regional and international governments, his intransience about leaving office by 2016, in accordance with the DRC constitution, has eroded his support. His family allegedly owns more than 70 DRC corporations.

Constitutional amendments increased the power of the central government over the provinces. However, the constitution still unequivocally limits the president to two terms. Therefore, elections were to be held again in 2016. However, President Kabila indicated his intention to run again beyond his term—or at least to delay the elections beyond the 2016 expected date. In May 2016, the DRC Constitutional Court ruled that the president may remain in power if there is no elected successor, thus providing Kabila a narrative to support his stay as president as long as there are no elections.

The political role of the Catholic Church (“has strong moral stature, national presence and mobilisation [sic] capacity”) is complicated. Church’s leaders advocated for the November 2016 elections to occur as planned, but the Catholic Bishops of the National Episcopal Conference of the Congo (CENCO) also brokered the DRC political transition agreement in December 2016 (which has not yet been implemented).

9. Military/Security. The security situation in the DRC remains volatile. Main threats are rebel groups and criminal networks, although the number of armed community self-defense entities are increasing. MONUSCO has responded with aerial operations and taken immediate steps to strengthen the protection of civilians through increased joint police and military patrols and redeploying additional troops of its FIB. Serious tensions exist between communities, especially local ethnic groups, migrants and the internally displaced (IDPs), who increased from 50,000 to 500,000 between 2011 and 2014. There are several influential players in the military/security arena:

a. State Armed Groups.

- The Army (Forces d’Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo, or FARDC), Navy (La Marine Nationale) and Congolese Air Force (Force Aérienne Congolaise). Estimated at 140K in strength, the FARDC was formed after the Second Congo War to integrate various armed groups and serve as a unified national armed forces. By 2010, the international community funded over $14 billion in military professionalism initiatives, training, and education. Additionally, the FARDC has at least 14 bilateral technical assistance agreements. Despite these efforts, the FARDC appear to lack any commitment to neutralizing the other armed groups. In many cases, there is evidence of collusion between the FARDC and armed group “allies.” Coordination of operations between MONUSCO and the FARDC was suspended during a dispute over the professionalism of two Congolese generals. Attempts to renew the relationship have

In 2013, FARDC members trained by US Special Operations “joined with other Congolese soldiers to rape 97 women and 33 girls as they fled a rebel advance in eastern Congo in November,” according to the United Nations. The training program was called Operation Olympic Chase, and was led by the State Department and the US Africa Command, which oversees US military operations on the continent.
faltered over reports of the government forces participating in violent activity against civilians (particularly against opposition parties and demonstrators) either directly or indirectly (by allowing non-state armed groups to attack the population and communities in their stead).

- **Garde Républicaine.** The Republican Guard was previously known as the Special Presidential Security Group. It is estimated to be a division-strength unit that is much “better trained, equipped, and paid than the FARDC.”

- **Agence Nationale de Renseignements (ANR).** The 12,000-strong ANR is the DRC’s national intelligence agency. Despite constitutional limitations, the ANR “routinely carries out surveillance of political opponents and is deployed in anti-riot roles alongside the police and military. It has also been accused of widespread human rights violations, including beatings, torture, disappearances, and extra-judicial killings.”

- **The Congolese National Police.** The European Union (EU) supported a decade-long comprehensive multiyear police training program that ended in 2016. “Despite these initiatives, the PNC largely remains in the mold of a partisan force that...has been...part of an array of security institutions over which the presidency has direct control.” In June 2016, the US imposed sanctions on the Kinshasa police chief, known as “esprit de morts” or “spirit of death”.

b. Non-State Armed Groups. Over seventy armed groups operate in the DRC, particularly in the eastern part. Many armed groups are remnants from the various wars or spill-over from neighboring country wars. Several are part of local self-defense groups. Some of the armed groups are part of a political party. Only a few armed groups are any part of any regional or global terrorism movement, along alliances of convenience do exist. A multi-period disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) is in its third phase, initiated in late 2015. While the programs appear successful, the participants have been known to be “recycled” frequently. Currently, the largest and/or most significant of the non-state armed groups appear to be (if alphabetical order):

- **Allied Democratic Forces (ADF):** The ADF is a Ugandan-led Islamist rebel group and is one of the oldest in the DRC, operating in the mountains of eastern DR Congo. Members want to establish Shari’a law in Uganda. The ADF was formed around 1998 from discontented sectors of Ugandan society after the overthrow of Idi Amin. In June 2010, the FARDC launched an attack called “Operation Ruwenzori” against the ADF. The ADF currently number approximately 500 combatants but the high level of secrecy in the organization and its compartmentalized structure make it difficult to ascertain its overall strength. Despite two years of operations against it, the ADF remains able to coordinate simultaneous attacks on the FARDC and MONUSCO, with over 500 civilians killed since 2014, and tens of thousands of others displaced. However, some observers note that the ADF may not be as strong as the DRC government purports and that, in fact, the ADF may serve as a “scapegoat” for the FARDC’s own actions or inactions.

- **Bakata Katanga:** The Bakata Katanga (“Cut off Katanga” in Swahili) is based on Katangan identity issues and claims to defend the region against exploitation by Kinshasa and reportedly has ties with secessionist organizations. The Bakata Katanga are allegedly connected to politicians with national prominence.

- **The Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR):** The FDLR is the largest illegal foreign armed group operating in the DR Congo and often considered the most abusive. While there is currently a growing number of Congolese among their ranks, the group is primarily formed from Hutu members of the Rwandan government and army ousted in 1994 as well as Rwandan refugees. Its
public purpose is to use military pressure to open "inter-Rwandan dialogue" with the current Rwandan government, but its covert purpose appears to be to overthrow the Rwandan government. The FDLR currently operates in eastern DR Congo and Katanga province. Its current strength is estimated to be 2000 combatants. In 2009, a joint operation was mounted against the FDLR by FARD C, the Rwandan Army (RDF), and UN forces.

- **Enyelle and Independent Movement of Liberation and Allies (MILIA):** MILIA conducted targeted killings against the Boba before moving south.

- **Front for Patriotic Resistance in Ituri (FRPI):** FRPI is an active armed militia and cattle thieves, attempting to evolve into a political party in DRC's north-eastern region of Ituri. Meanwhile, some estimate the FRPI account for almost 25% of human rights violations in DRC.

- **Kamwina (Kamuina) Nsapu Militia.** DRC soldiers allegedly killed over 100 civilians of the regionally dominant Luba ethnic group, to include almost 40 women, between February 9-13, and thousands were displaced. The militia group—many of whom were children—apparently sought “to avenge the death of their leader, Jean-Pierre Mpandi, whom the tribe had named their “Kamwina Nsapu”. The DRC called it an inter-tribal conflict that they forcefully resolved. However, in March 2017 the militia group claimed responsibility for the kidnapping of two UN workers (including one American) and the beheading of 42 police officers.

- **The Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA):** The LRA is a Ugandan rebel group currently operating along the northern border areas of Congo as well as in the eastern Central African Republic. In 1988, Joseph Kony created the LRA with the claim of restoring the honor of his ethnic Acholi people. It was based in a spiritual rebel movement “Holy Spirit Movement” and combined with the remnants of the Ugandan army, the group was formed primarily by the Acholi tribe in Northern Uganda. In September 2005, the LRA moved to the DRC and began a violent expansion campaign in September 2008. The LRA is made up of hard core Ugandan combatants as well as recruits forcefully abducted from the DRC, South Sudan and the Central African Republic. LRA soldiers quickly gained a reputation for murder, torture, rape and mutilations, as well as abducting tens of thousands of children over the years to use as sex slaves and child soldiers. In May 2010, the US Congress passed the “Lord’s Resistance Army Disarmament and Northern Uganda Recovery Act,” which follows the US State Department inclusion of the LRA on the Terrorist Exclusion List in 2001 and designation of Joseph Kony as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist under Executive Order 13324 in 2008. In October 2011, 100 US soldiers assumed advisory roles in support of regional militaries. The United Nations estimated in 2013 that the LRA had killed more than 100,000 people and kidnapped more than 60,000 over the previous quarter-century. That same year, the US military launched Operation Observant Compass, increasing the number of soldiers and military aircraft. (In recent months, a series of high-profile defections—as well as the defections of several low-level rebels—has shrunk the LRA from its high of over 3,000 to under 100. In March 2017, the US announced it is removing its military and high-technological equipment from the operations. The AU is considering its future in this engagement as well. The US considers Kony a "specially designated global terrorist" and has offered up to $5 million for information leading to his capture. He remains at large.

- **Maï Mai Sheka:** A group formed in 2009 by mineral resource businessmen, it believes that the
land should belong to the original, indigenous inhabitants. Sometimes referred to as a "self defense militia", it is primarily “composed of members of DRC's Nande, Hunde and Kobo communities…in opposition to rivals from the Nyaturu group, which also represents ethnic Hutus.” They gained attention due to their aggressive sexual violence campaign in 2010. In conjunction with the FDLR, they mass-raped more than 240 civilians and after, looted their homes and shops. A MONUSCO base was within miles of the sexual attack but was not notified until days later, and therefore was unable to protect the citizens. Mai-Mai groups are the most prolific recruiters of child soldiers and perpetrators of human rights abuses, to include a recent attack on 25 Hutus, hacked to death and beheaded.

- **March 23 Movement (M23):** M23 was made up primarily of ethnic Tutsis allegedly supported by the Rwandan government, rebelling against the GoDRC for supposedly reneging on the 2009 peace deal which included issues of land and mineral resource control. By 2013, it was defeated by the FARDC and MONUSCO’s FIB. The DRC conducted an amnesty program with some measure of success and the M23 allegedly converted to a strictly political movement. However, there are continuing reports of M23 (or ex-M23) members still operating as armed members, although the political movement leadership denies these claims. In particular, in February 2017, Uganda announced their authorities detained tens of M23 members trying to return into the DRC from Ugandan camps “into the general public.” It is not clear if those members intended to continue opposition activities, or if the current M23 leader, Sultani Makenga, remained in the custody of Ugandan authorities. (Makenga is the subject of US and EU sanctions.)

- **National Congress for the Defense of the People (CNDP):** CNDP became a political party in political party in 2009 and a few thousand of its fighters joined the Congolese army.

- **The National Liberation Forces (FNL):** The FNL is a Burundian rebel group originally formed in 1985 as the military wing of a Hutu-led rebel group called the PALIPEHUTU. Both the PALIPEHUTU and the FNL signed a peace agreement in September 2006 and became simply FNL. Many FNL integrated into the national Burundian army in 2010, and the remnants restarted rebel activities to fight the Burundian armed forces. The FNL currently appears to be in an alliance with Mai Mai Yakutumba and FDLR.

- **Nyatura Rebels:** Nyatura Rebels, a Congolese Hutu militia, collaborated with FDLR rebels and the Congolese army to defeat M23.

- **Patriotic Forces for the Liberation of Congo (FPLC):** FPLC is involved in human rights violations including ethnic killings, torture, rape, and mutilation.

- **Raia Mutomboki:** Raia Mutomboki started operating in 2011 for self-defense against attacks perpetrated by the FDLR.

- **Organized Criminal Elements (Domestic and Transnational):** Organized crime in the DRC exists at all levels of society. Local collaborators include a complex and dynamic mix of legitimate business people; Islamist extremists, terrorists, and kidnappers; police and army officers; militia groups; and local politicians. Crime exists in many forms, the most prevalent being corruption, looting of mineral resources, drug and human trafficking, kidnapping, and poaching.

c. **Other International Actors.** In 2015, the DRC made it very clear to its international partners that it would no longer tolerate what it sees as interference with its sovereign prerogatives, the sharpest anti-international-partner rhetoric since 2011. The DRC singled out MONUSCO for additional criticism, declaring the head of MONUSCO’s human rights division as persona non grata for supposed anti-government bias.
• **Regional Neighbors: Burundi, Rwanda, and Uganda.** Burundi shares a border with the DRC as well as significant concerns about Rwanda and alleged Rwandan actions that contribute to the instability in both countries. Burundi believes Rwanda is recruiting refugees to oust its government. At the same time, the DRC suggests that Rwanda is recruiting and arming Burundian refugees, providing them Congolese ballot cards, then sending them into the DRC “to cause trouble.” **Uganda** allegedly supports many of the rebel armed groups, including the M23, although Uganda denies this claim.

• **Other Countries.**

**China.** China’s ongoing interest in Congo’s minerals, which includes purchase of mines and mining rights, despite the global economic slowdown, has geopolitical ramifications. China is a TCC for MINUSCO and other African peace missions. It also provided the [African Union with US$100 million in military assistance for its peacekeeping operations](#). China certainly has significant—and increasing—business interests in Africa. Some observe that:

In essence, China deploys peacekeeping troops because it needs to protect its multi-billion investments and numerous assets, enterprises and citizens abroad. Through its peacekeepers, Beijing can also elevate its status as a responsible stakeholder and security provider in the international community and improve operational capabilities of Chinese military and police forces.

• **International Organizations.** There are many other international agencies operating in DRC, beyond the UN. Some examples are:

**The African Union (AU)** and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR). The AU is engaged in many activities to reduce or mitigate instability in the DRC. On 6 April 2016, the AU formally named former Togolese Prime Minister Edem Kodjo to facilitate a dialogue to address the electoral processes for the planned—but not conducted—November presidential elections. However, most major opposition parties refused to participate and doubt the AU’s impartiality. Regardless, the AU and IGCLR endorsed the October agreement, which contributed to Kabila motivation to remain in power.

**The European Union (EU).** The EU deployed a [short term mission](#) to DRC in 2007, to assist the UN mission then known as MONUC. By 2010, the EU spent $14 billion to support rebuilding efforts, including security sector reform, and in 2014 committed to another $1 billion to fund these initiatives through 2020. The EU also designated DRC officials for the first time in 2016.

**The International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR).** Established in 2008, the ICGLR envisions by 2018, the Conference Secretariat (CS) is an efficient and effective institution and the focal point coordinating the implementation of the Pact and other related initiatives of the thirteen Member States and other stakeholders.

**The Southern African Development Community (SADC).** The SADC has “decades of security engagement and regional diplomacy” in the DRC, intervening twice by force: 1) 1998, with intervention by Angola, Namibia, and Zimbabwe to beat back a Rwandan and Ugandan invasion; and 2) 2003, leaving a force to assist the DRC’s security sector after the war. MONUSCO’s FIB, deployed in 2013, is essentially a SADC force.

The SADC involvement in the failed October 2016 peace negotiations may have weakened its reputation as an [impartial and highly influential actor](#).
10. Economic. Over half the DRC’s fiscal revenue is sourced by the extraordinary mineral wealth, with copper and cobalt as “the bedrock” of the economy. However, there was a significant reduction in production of both minerals in the spring of 2016, and production of all other minerals is also expected to decline. This seriously affects foreign currency reserves, worker livelihoods, and is putting pressure on the Congolese Franc in a politically tense period. A proposed Executive Order from the US presidential administration suggests a relaxation of some of the aspects of the Dodd-Frank Act that allegedly create arbitrary and costly demands on the mining industry, from mining extraction to sale in a commercial market.

The DRC has vast natural resource wealth but is in the midst of economic recovery after severe decline. Reasons for decline include corruption and conflict. Economic conditions improved in 2003 after the installation of national reforms, especially in the mining sector, the main export income. In 2012, the GDP was $47.16 billion, growing to $55.81 billion by 2014, at a real growth rate of 9.1%. Main industries include mining (of cobalt, copper, diamonds, gold, tin, tungsten, and zinc), mineral processing, consumer products (such as textiles, plastics, footwear, and cigarettes), metal products, processed foods and beverages, timber, cement, and commercial ship repair. International business policies and laws impact the availability of the mineral resources for legal export, although corruption and criminal activity also undermine the influx of money into government coffers. Consequently, DRC looks to additional avenues for export material, such as logging in protected areas. Although the DRC is at a much higher growth rate than any other Sub-Saharan African country, long-term issues (such as continued corruption, an uncertain legal framework, and a lack of transparency in government policy) can negatively impact the economy.

11. Social. The DRC ranks 20th in the world in population size (over 79 million); and is on track to become one of the top ten most populous nations in 2050, with an estimated population of 194 million. The Congolese population is made up of over 200 African ethnic groups, the majority being Bantu. The four largest tribes are Mongo, Luba and Kongo (all Bantu ethnic origin) and Mangbetu-Azande (Hamitic ethnic origin.) These four tribes make up 45% of the total DRC population.

As of 2015, the median age is 18.1 years, with 43% of the population 0-14 years, and 21% 15-24 years. Therefore, a sizable majority (64%) of the population is younger than 24 years old. Contraception use is low, due in part to the continuing “cultural preference” for larger families. The average life expectancy is 57.3 years, among the lowest in the world.

The official language is French, accompanied by the unofficial languages of Lingala (a lingua franca trade language), Kingwana (a dialect of Kiswahili or Swahili), Kikongo, and Tshiluba. Approximately 50% of the population identifies as Roman Catholic, 20% as Protestant, 10% as Kimbanguist, 10% as Muslim, and 10% as other indigenous beliefs.

According to some estimates, almost two-thirds of the population is literate, in that they can read and write in one of the languages. However, one in three DRC children do not go to school. As literacy is predominately found among men (78%), it is usually the girls who are not educated.

There is no birthright citizenship; that is, at least one parent must be a DRC citizen for their children to also be citizens. Dual citizenship is not recognized. In addition:

The DRC is a source and host country for refugees. Between 2012 and 2014, more than 119,000 Congolese refugees returned from the Republic of Congo to the relative stability of northwest DRC, but more than 540,000 Congolese refugees remained abroad as of year-end 2015. In addition, more than 1.7 million Congolese are internally displaced, the vast majority fleeing violence in the DRC’s eastern provinces between rebel group and
Congolese armed forces. Thousands of refugees have come to the DRC from neighboring countries, including Rwanda, the Central African Republic, and Burundi.

As of 31 December 2016, the DRC had more than 2.2 million internally displaced people (IDPs), of whom 52% were women and young girls. Almost 90% of displacements were due to armed violence/conflict. With 40% of displaced people, North Kivu is the most affected province of all. With the exception of Tanganyika, host families represent the principal source of shelter for IDPs.

### Rule of Law

The police have violently cracked down on internal dissent. Protests and demonstrations will continue as the political election process—and progress—remains in doubt. Most legal justice is implemented by external agencies, such as the International Criminal Court (ICC) rulings against a former Congolese rebel leader (and vice president) guilty of war crimes and crimes against humanity (for the rapes and killings committed by his troops in the Central African Republic from 2003 to 2006). It was the first such case to focus on the use of sexual violence as a tool of war.

### Human Rights

The DRC human rights record remains problematic, with unlawful killings, disappearances, torture, and rape committed by all armed groups, and arbitrary arrest and detention by state security forces. All continued to recruit and retain child soldiers and to compel forced labor by adults and children. There appears to be negligible legal accountability for these activities. As an example, no investigation was completed in regards to mass grave found in 2015. However, the recent arrest of seven DRC military officers, charged with war crimes based on video evidence, is a note-worthy exception.

### Humanitarian Assistance

The food security of 40K persons in the eastern part of the country is dire. Response is challenged by the destruction of the infrastructure as well as the lack of coherent and comprehensive approaches. This recent crisis is in addition to the ongoing humanitarian issues which are either caused or compounded by the human rights violations and criminal violence experienced by...
the population. Almost 30 percent of children under the age of 5 are malnourished, despite fertile soil and other vast power and mineral resources.

Just over half of total population has access to improved water, with better access in urban areas compared to rural areas. In contrast, almost 75% of the population has no access to improved sanitation, with negligible difference between urban and rural areas. Consequently, the risk of disease is very high. In 2016, 25,030 people died from cholera, malaria, measles or yellow fever. Malaria was the leading cause of death and hospitalization, with over 14.1 million cases reported from January to December 2016, including over 23,800 deaths. The outbreak of “Angola Yellow Fever,” started in December 2015, was declared "at end" in February 2017, after almost 3,000 suspected cases reported.

In February 2017, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), announced a three-year Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP), requesting “$748 million to address the most critical needs of 6.7 million people...to allow humanitarian partners to focus on preparedness and flexible, long-term funding...between now and 2019.” Projected reductions in US Government funding for aid will significantly impact the programs in the DRC.
12. **Infrastructure.** The DRC faces the most challenges in regards to infrastructure on the African continent. Over 50% of the existing infrastructure needs attention. Infrastructure development is complicated due to the state’s low population density, extensive forestlands, and crisscrossing rivers. There are 198 airports, 26 of which have paved runways. Out of 153,497 km of roadways, only 2,794 km are paved. There are 15,000 km of waterways including the Congo, its tributaries, and unconnected lakes. Although there exists 4,007 km of railways, they are no longer used. However, there have been signs of improvement. External funding has been provided for the rebuilding of the country’s road network. The DRC has the largest hydropower resources in Africa, which could lead to meeting its own energy demands as well as providing an additional large export. In order for the DRC to improve dramatically enough to catch up with the rest of the developing world, it will need to spend $5.3 billion a year for ten years.

13. **Information.** Radio is the main source of information in the DRC, although many parts of the country are out of range and rely on Short Wave broadcasts on non-local stations (such as BBS World Service). There are two state-owned radio stations and about 100 privately owned stations. The fixed line telephone system is severely lacking – less than 1 per 100 inhabitants has a subscription for a fixed line, ranking the DRC as 217th in the World. However, 37.1 million people have cell phones, ranking it as 34th in the world in regards to cell phone usage. Internet use is very sparse. There are a total of 290,000
people (less than 1% of the population) who use the Internet, ranking it 143rd in the world. Because of sporadic electricity, technology has been unable to significantly improve as of yet. The GoDRC has history of restricting access to information, such as the blocking of social media ordered in 2016, prior to the expiration of President Kabila’s official term of office.

**Peace Operations Functions**

14. **Command and Control.** Current MONUSCO leaders include:

- **Special Representative of the Secretary-General:** Maman Sambo Sidikou (Niger)
- **Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Operations and the Rule of Law:** David Gressly (United States)
- **Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General/Resident Coordinator/ Humanitarian Coordinator:** Mamadou Diallo (Guinea)
- **Force Commander:** Lieutenant General Derick Mbuyiselo Mgwebi (South Africa)
- **Police Commissioner:** Awale Abdounasir (Djibouti)

15. **Intelligence.** MONUSCO has a Joint Mission Analysis Centre (JMAC) and recently acquired UAVs (unmanned aerial vehicles, or drones) in order to allow MONUSCO to provide its own intelligence gathering capability, distinct from the DRC’s FARDC. Within the UN, there is a divide and a lack of information sharing between the UN Country Team (UNCT) and MONUSCO forces. The UNCT does not want to be associated with MONUSCO forces.

16. **Operations.** While the FIB was created for unique purposes in MONUSCO, its effectiveness is hampered by its uncertain relationship with government security forces and well as its professional discipline issues (i.e. child and sexual abuse). According to some observers, the FIB’s presence gives some passive MONUSCO contingents an additional excuse to avoid implementing the mandate assertively.

In addition to the FIB and regular military and police contingents and units, MONUSCO deploys Mobile Monitoring Response Teams “to possibly prevent, investigate and document human rights violations in line with its mandate.” Another concept originating with MONUSCO are the Community Liaison Assistants (CLAs) that are “national staff, deployed alongside uniformed components of United Nations peacekeeping operations and managed by Civil Affairs components” in order “to fill a gap in community engagement skills.”

17. **Protection.**

a. **Mission Protection.** UN personnel, humanitarian personnel, human rights defenders, and MONUSCO forces are all at constant risk of attack by rebel groups.

b. **Protection of Civilians.** Rape as a war tactic exists in the DRC more than anywhere else in Africa. Child soldiers in the non-state armed groups are a large issue in the DRC—forced and voluntary. No case of recruitment by the FARDC has been documented. There are over 2.75 million internally displaced Congolese citizens and over 500,000 refugees in neighboring countries. Estimates vary, but millions of Congolese have died since conflict began in 1998. The IDPs are among the most vulnerable, as they are a majority of women and children.

18. **Sustainment.** The DRC is so vast and disconnected that it creates problems in delivery of goods, services, and personnel. This slows down any processes of humanitarian assistance, the delivery of essential goods in crises, and the response times in any violent conflict. It takes about 3-4 flight hours to
reach eastern DRC from the major airport in Kinshasa that is used for the transition of goods, services, and personnel. The isolation of eastern DRC makes casualty evacuations difficult as well. There is a lack of infrastructure to support immediate response and transportation. This lack of infrastructure also affects the maintenance of UN vehicles. Maintenance is difficult because the conditions of the roads can damage or ruin the vehicles and the transportation of new parts is difficult. In addition, there is no way to repair the vehicles when in such remote locations. Finally, there are units in these remote areas and it is difficult to supply them and respond to them. The UN Country Team and MONUSCO compete for limited infrastructure to perform their respective duties.

Issues and Considerations

19. Issues. The major issues confronting MONUSCO in the DRC are summarized as follows:

- Lack of trust and communication between MONUSCO and the GoDRC.
- Lack of professional standards among MONUSCO soldiers.
- High political tensions and resulting propensity for violence.
- Civilians remain at high risk for severe human rights abuses.
- The bulk of MONUSCO relies on the FIB to conduct meaningful operations.
- The impact of the troop authorization reduction.

20. Considerations.

a. US. Perhaps the most pertinent consideration for the DRC—and other international organizations' considerations regarding the DRC—are those apropos the future US policy and interests in Africa in general—and with President Kabila and the DRC in particular. On the one hand, perceived US disinterest in the DRC may embolden President Kabila to continue his intransigence about holding national elections and leaving his office. On the other hand, the current US Administration may remain inclined towards African engagement as a means to: counter Chinese influence and development on the continent; address access restrictions to mineral resources and supposed negative impacts on the global economy; and continue the fight against terrorism.

It is clear that President Kabila applauded the results of the November 2016 US national election. A GoDRC spokesperson indicated a US policy change was "welcomed", implying that President Kabila expected greater support from the new Administration. It is less clear what US policy changes—if any—the new Administration may promote. Some observers noted that "not one of the 29 leaders the president-elect had spoken to in the week following his election was from sub-Saharan Africa" and that "in his sole foreign-policy speech as a candidate, Trump mentioned Africa only once..." (he has reportedly spoken to some African leaders in the past month). In the past, both as a presidential candidate and in previous years, President Trump has indicated little interest in African issues, except to castigate President Barack Obama’s Power Africa initiative (a bipartisan effort to build reliable electric power grids) as corrupt.

With little new Administration US policy objectives detail regarding the DRC to review, future direction can only be gleaned from other proposals and statements. Arguments that suggest the “America First” perspective will have negative repercussions on the African continent are supported by recent language and actions that suggest the following:

- Aversion towards climate change-related international agreements. With rising sea levels, “more than 70 million Africans could be affected by coastal flooding by the year 2080, up from 1 million in 1990”. Increasing drought conditions across the continent further exacerbate tenuous food security. Therefore, changes in US approach towards climate change regulations and agreements have the potential to drastically affect the African continent.
• **Antipathy toward trade agreements and regulation.** President Trump has indicated antipathy over many international and bilateral trade agreements. The African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), a trade deal offering preferential access to US markets to some three dozen African countries, may be considered one of those “bad deals”. While Congress renewed it for 10 years (in 2016), it may be possible to secure the votes to repeal it. Further, reports of a proposed *suspension of the Dodd-Frank Act tenets* that regulate “conflict minerals” access to marketplace concern many international observers. While the tenets attempt to ensure illegally acquired minerals do not benefit improper (criminal or rebel) agencies, they also constrain the legitimate work opportunities of the local populations and government revenues. In February, the International Conference of the Great-Lakes Region (ICGLR) issued a statement asking the US to maintain the “conflict minerals” tenets of Dodd-Frank, in part due to the current political situation in the DRC.

• **Inclination to reduce—and, in some cases, eliminate—funding for aid and development programs.** The US provides significant development aid, security assistance, and emergency humanitarian assistance to the DRC and is the largest financial contributor to MONUSCO. Proposed budget cuts to those programs will have direct impact on the DRC. Perhaps most significant to *long term US interests in Africa,* however is that “China has positioned itself to be a steadfast partner for Africa in a time of geopolitical uncertainty and questionable American commitment to the continent...(replacing) the United States as Africa’s largest trading partner.” Therefore, it may be a “strategic mistake” to disengage from Africa if matters between the US and China escalate. The *renewed MONUSCO mandate is the first adopted* since the US signaled its intent to reduce foreign aid funding. Its imposed reduction of troop strength is reflective of US policy to decrease international program funding.

Some observers suggest *specific actions to consider:*

• The US Administration should provide a statement that supports “all bilateral and regional initiatives that the United States has in Africa, to include AGOA, Power Africa, and the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership, among others.”
• Ensure those officials appointed to US government positions at Africa desks have expertise and strong ties in Africa.
• Invite the newly elected chairperson of the African Union, Moussa Faki Mahamat of Chad, to visit DC, and host a US-Africa leaders summit (similar to the one hosted by President Obama in 2014).
• Explore new US business engagement in Africa to show continued American support for Africa’s economic rise.

In summary, some observers indicate that continued Administration “silence” on Africa—coupled with apparent reversal of policies important to Africa—“threatens to undermine decades of bipartisan support for American engagement and sideline the United States as China reaps the benefits of increased cooperation with Africa.” There are many areas in which the US can provide more assistance and support. At this time, US support is mainly financial and multilateral. The major recommendation for the US, in regards to the DRC, is to *stay engaged,* since instability in the DRC has a significant impact on stability throughout the region. Or, as one observer suggests, the three *priorities* of the US in Africa should be: Combating terrorism and instability, Secure Africa’s fragile economic progress, and Reconcile national security interests with democracy objectives.

b. **UN.** The major recommendation for the UN in regards to DRC is to consider a revision of the mandate should President Kabila ignore the agreement in place for elections. Additional recommendations for MONUSCO include:
• Ensure that its main priority is the protection of civilians; and
• Increase capacity to quickly respond to early warning signs of attacks by the armed rebel groups;

c. DRC. The major recommendation for the DRC is to actively participate in the dialogue to establish the electoral process and the importance of having full commitment to the constitution, as well as:

• The FARDC must not allow previous perpetrators of crimes against humanity to join its forces. In addition, the FARDC should remove all members accused of serious human rights violations from leadership positions;
• All FARDC members should be trained in the protection of civilians, respect for human rights, and International Humanitarian Law;
• Perpetrators of human rights violations must be held accountable;
• Financial flows must be “regular, transparent and in line with statutes;” and
• Politicians should denounce the use of armed groups and local actors/leaders must be encouraged to continue efforts of "cooling the temperature to prevent conflict”

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