

CHARTING A FUTURE FOR PEACEKEEPING IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO



RECOGNIZE. PREVENT. PROTECT. AMEND.

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COVER IMAGE: A MONUSCO delegation waits to board a UN helicopter at the end of a mission in South Kivu. During the trip, members of MONUSCO's Child Protection and DDR sections engaged with non-state armed actors to encourage an end to the use of child soldiers by these groups.

MONUSCO Photo/Jacob de Lange

Center for Civilians in Conflict (CIVIC) works to improve protection for civilians caught in conflicts around the world. We work with armed actors and civilians in conflict to develop and implement solutions to prevent, mitigate, and respond to civilian harm. We bring the voices of civilians themselves to those making decisions affecting their lives.

CIVIC's vision is for a future where parties involved in conflicts recognize the dignity and rights of civilians, prevent harm, protect civilians caught in conflict, and amend harm. To accomplish this, we assess the causes of civilian harm in particular conflicts, craft creative solutions to address that harm, and engage with civilians, governments, militaries, and international and regional institutions to implement these solutions.

We measure our success in the short-term by the adoption of new policies and practices that lead to the improved wellbeing of civilians caught in a conflict. In the long-term, our goal is to create a new global mindset around robust civilian protection and harm response.

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I. OVERVIEW

It has been two decades since the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUSCO) and its predecessor peacekeeping mission, MONUC, were deployed to the country. Over the past several years, MONUSCO has come under increasing pressure to develop an exit strategy and plan for a phased withdrawal from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). For example, MONUSCO's March 2019 mandate requested the UN Secretary-General to provide the UN Security Council with "an independent strategic review assessing the continued challenges to peace and security in the DRC and articulating a phased, progressive, and comprehensive exit strategy..."¹ Early development of an exit strategy can be a good practice for peacekeeping missions, obliging them to identify what the conditions for a successful drawdown look like and to build work plans and strategies that coherently contribute to the desired end state. The strategic review therefore offers an opportunity for reflection and analysis that can strengthen MONUSCO's planning. However, the timeline for MONUSCO's activities and presence in the DRC should be driven by analysis of the conflict environment to ensure that MONUSCO's drawdown and eventual exit from the DRC are not premature and do not excessively endanger civilians or jeopardize regional peace and security.

This policy brief provides analysis that can contribute to a discussion on the future of MONUSCO. First, it reviews recent conflict developments and opportunities that will have an impact on protection threats and on MONUSCO's operations. Then, it discusses shifts in MONUSCO's budget, presence, and mobility over the last few years. It identifies challenges that have arisen from MONUSCO's attempts to reduce its field presence and shift to more mobile operations. Lessons from past experience can help inform future planning around base closures and withdrawal. Additionally, the policy brief discusses several key issues that Member States, MONUSCO, and the government of the DRC will need to jointly address alongside humanitarian and development actors to facilitate the Mission's exit.

In recent years, Member States have reduced overall funding for peacekeeping missions and pressured them to use resources more efficiently. MONUSCO has not been immune to these developments. Its budget and troop ceiling have shrunk significantly since 2017. To cope with these reductions, the Mission has closed bases and increasingly relied on mobile deployments to protect civilians and deliver on a wide range of other mandated tasks. In the span of three years, MONUSCO has gone from maintaining over 100 bases

around the country to operating from around 40 bases concentrated in six provinces and the capital, Kinshasa. These significant adjustments in the Mission's footprint and posture have come at a time when violence and political unrest are still rife in many areas of the DRC.

In an environment of shrinking resources, MONUSCO has attempted to concentrate its presence in areas with the highest levels of violence. Nonetheless, the closure of MONUSCO bases in some volatile areas

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where they were underpinning stability has left civilians feeling abandoned and at the mercy of increasingly active armed groups. This is the case in Masisi and Nyabiondo, for example, where MONUSCO closed its bases in 2017. Since then, armed group violence in these areas has resurged, community alert networks (CANs) established by the Mission have collapsed, and local civil society leaders have struggled to continue their work in the face of harassment and targeted attacks.

While MONUSCO cannot maintain its presence in the DRC indefinitely, it can link future withdrawals to benchmarks that help guarantee drawdowns are triggered by improvements in the security environment and the institutional capacity of the Congolese government, state security actors, and civil society actors to take the lead on protection activities currently carried out by MONUSCO. It can continue implementing tailored and comprehensive strategies that coordinate

the efforts of military, police, and civilian personnel to reduce the number and activities of armed groups in the DRC. The success of these plans depends in large part on government buy-in and on avoiding disruption by spoilers benefiting from the current system. Therefore, MONUSCO should ensure that efforts to combat armed groups in the field are strongly tied to political engagement with powerbrokers in Kinshasa and regional capitals.

MONUSCO alone cannot create a secure environment in the DRC. Member States and donors who want to see a safe and successful drawdown of the Mission should fulfill their commitments by taking on larger diplomatic roles and engaging bilaterally on security sector reform (SSR) initiatives and programs for the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) of combatants.² Moreover, donors have consistently funded humanitarian activities in the DRC at levels significantly lower than humanitarians assess are required to address the population's acute needs. As MONUSCO gradually draws down, funding for the protection-related and peacebuilding work of humanitarian and development agencies should be scaled up. In the short term, it will be difficult for other actors in the DRC to take on MONUSCO's political engagement activities, human rights monitoring, and rule of law initiatives. As with other peacekeeping operations, these sectors of MONUSCO may have a lifespan beyond other components of the Mission.

Planning for MONUSCO's departure should take place on a realistic timeline that allows other actors to build capacity in areas likely to be weakened by the Mission's exit. If timelines for MONUSCO's drawdown are not realistic or linked to benchmarks, civilians will bear the cost. As one Congolese civil society leader warned, "It is a whole generation who are being drowned, a generation who slowly burns. In armed groups, the youth no longer see their future but are trapped by banditry. They learn to kill their fellow men, to rape, and to plunder. So, it is a generation...going up in smoke."³

This policy brief provides detailed recommendations for UN Member States, the UN Secretariat, and MONUSCO to chart a course for the Mission that contributes to a more secure future for civilians in the DRC. Some recommendations are provided in the text for humanitarian actors, as well, including that they build their capacity to engage with armed actors and negotiate access. Only limited recommendations are made to the government of the DRC. The Congolese government holds the primary responsibility to protect civilians; a lack of commitment on the part of the government to protection and institutional reform has undercut many of MONUSCO's initiatives. However,

the focus of CIVIC's research in support of this brief has been on the role of the UN and peacekeeping in contributing to improved protection of civilians, so the brief's recommendations are focused on this area. This brief is based on 139 interviews with stakeholders, including 34 interviews with MONUSCO civilian officials, 4 with MONUSCO military officials, 2 with UNPOL officials, 5 with UN headquarters officials, 16 with humanitarian actors, 11 with diplomats, 4 with other subject matter experts, 19 with Congolese civil society leaders, and 44 with Congolese civilians.⁴ Interviews were conducted between February and September 2019.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

To Member States:

- Include language in MONUSCO's mandate, which will be renewed in December 2019, ensuring that the Mission's drawdown is linked to a series of benchmarks that measure improvements in the security environment and the capacity of the Congolese government to take on protection responsibilities that are currently being fulfilled by MONUSCO.
- Support MONUSCO with appropriate funds and resources, including sufficient air assets, to implement its mandate and respond to serious protection threats in the country until benchmarks indicate that the Congolese government has the capacity and will to protect civilians.
- Engage bilaterally with the Congolese government and other actors to encourage SSR and DDR initiatives that support the establishment of security forces, state authorities, and a justice sector that are accountable to the population and able to provide protection to civilians, including protection from and accountability for sexual and gender-based violence.
- Scale up funding for protection and peacebuilding programming carried out by humanitarian and development organizations, including through bilateral or pooled donor assistance. Ensure that funding is predictable and done in advance of or in parallel to a gradual reduction of MONUSCO's activities.
- Undertake serious and sustained diplomatic engagement at the local, national, regional, and international levels to advance cross-border political solutions to conflict and deter violence against civilians.

To the UN Secretariat:

- In consultation with MONUSCO, determine what surge support would be valuable to the Mission and assist by deploying personnel from headquarters to the Mission to reinforce capacity in needed areas.
- Support MONUSCO in adopting regional approaches to address conflict and armed group violence in the DRC.
- Engage in coordinated planning with humanitarian and development agencies at the headquarters level that supports integrated planning for transition of peacekeeping activities and withdrawal of MONUSCO from the DRC.
- Identify and generate troops and police with the equipment, training, and will to respond rapidly and flexibly to protection threats as MONUSCO's presence shrinks; prioritize deployment of high-performing troops.

To MONUSCO:

- Ensure Mission reporting to Member States accurately portrays the impact of reductions to the Mission budget and footprint on the protection of civilians.
- In the future, consider developing multiple internal work plans and risk-informed budgets based on likely and worst-case scenarios in terms of the protection situation in the DRC and the potential for future budget and personnel cuts. This process could serve as a foundation for the budget submitted to Member States and help with Mission planning to absorb unexpected reductions if they occur.
- With assistance from the Secretariat and the UN's network of Best Practice and Policy Officers, jointly conduct a comprehensive review of the "protection through projection" model, including the impact of recent base closures and the effectiveness of early warning and response mechanisms to inform future planning.
- Through consultation and a strategic dialogue with the Congolese government and civil society, build on the work of the independent strategic review of MONUSCO to develop benchmarks and a vision for MONUSCO's exit. Among other factors, these benchmarks should include progress on DDR and SSR, as well as measured positive improvements in

the ability and willingness of state actors to provide protection for civilians.

- Continue drafting and implementing comprehensive strategies for reducing the number and activities of armed groups, ensuring that these strategies involve national and regional political engagement with powerbrokers. Adopt a system for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of these strategies so that they can be adjusted when necessary.
- Continue supporting the development of national frameworks that aim to reduce human rights violations, reform the security and justice sectors, and demobilize armed actors.
- Redouble efforts to build the capacity of provincial authorities and civil society actors, including through CANs and local protection committees (LPCs), so that they are sustainable without the regular or permanent presence of MONUSCO.

II. OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS EMERGING FROM RECENT POLITICAL AND CONFLICT DEVELOPMENTS

"People are very optimistic; but, with time, people will keep insisting that justice has not been done."⁵

The last officially recognized war in the DRC ended two decades ago with the signing of a 1999 peace agreement. However, significant political unrest and internal conflicts, sometimes involving regional actors, have continued to plague many parts of the country. The refusal of former president Joseph Kabila to step down from power when his term officially ended in December 2016 fueled renewed armed group violence, displacement, heightened levels of sexual violence, and political protests in many areas of the country throughout 2017 and 2018. In January 2019, Kabila ceded his post to incoming president Felix Tshisekedi in the DRC's first democratic transfer of power.

This change of executive leadership in the DRC has created a number of opportunities for progress. Under the previous administration, the efforts of MONUSCO, UN Member States, donors, non-governmental agencies, and civil society actors to contribute to institutional reform, peace, and justice were often hampered by a lack of political will and commitment from the Kabila administration to address these issues. At the time of CIVIC's research in February and March of 2019, stakeholders were hopeful that the



Indian peacekeepers provide force protection for a delegation comprised of MONUSCO officials and Congolese government representatives attending disarmament talks with militia members of the Ituri Patriotic Resistance Front (FRPI).

UN Photo/Michael Ali

change in executive leadership would gradually lead to improvements in the country's security situation. Tshisekedi has voiced his intention to begin addressing corruption and armed group violence. He is also courting international investment and has undertaken a number of regional trips aimed at improving relations with neighboring countries, which will be important for demobilizing some armed groups and stimulating economic growth. Moreover, a majority of the ministers appointed to Tshisekedi's cabinet are new to the political scene and are therefore unmarred by past accusations of corruption.⁶

Yet, the elections that brought Tshisekedi to power were tarnished by significant evidence of rigging and accusations of a last-minute political deal between Kabila and Tshisekedi.⁷ Although Tshisekedi's cabinet includes many political newcomers, two-thirds of the posts were filled with officials from Kabila's political coalition.⁸ Likewise, Kabila's coalition won a large majority of seats in parliamentary and provincial elections. Lack of control over these political bodies will limit Tshisekedi's ability to pivot quickly from the policies of the former administration or to enact reforms.⁹ Moreover, because of the allegations of electoral fraud surrounding Tshisekedi's victory, Congolese citizens and non-state armed actors may question his legitimacy as a leader and challenge his authority.¹⁰ As one

MONUSCO civilian official summarized, "The situation is still fragile. ...The president doesn't really have the leverage to drive all the changes that are expected by the population."¹¹ Many stakeholders who spoke with CIVIC characterized the early months of 2019 as a "grace period" for Tshisekedi, which will expire if his minority government struggles to achieve progress on security or battling corruption.¹² In Kinshasa and Goma, political protests against Tshisekedi have already emerged.¹³ Overall, peacekeepers, humanitarians, and civil society leaders who spoke with CIVIC cautioned that achieving real improvements in the security situation will be a gradual process.

Data on insecurity in the DRC since the presidential election presents a mixed picture. The Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED) reported an increase in incidents of political violence during the first six months of Tshisekedi's presidency over the same six-month period under Kabila in 2018. Between January and June of 2019, they recorded nearly 1,900 conflict-related fatalities from 790 incidents, compared to approximately 500 fatalities from 630 incidents between January and June of 2018.¹⁴ By contrast, the UN Joint Human Rights Office documented a slight reduction in human rights violations in the first six months of 2019 when compared to the first six months of 2018. The difference in these figures is unsurprising

given that they are based on different methods of data collection and are measuring slightly different types of violence. What emerges clearly from both reports, however, is that the level of violent incidents remains extremely high. An incident monitoring tool called the Kivu Security Tracker, which looks at violence in North and South Kivu, reported that an average of 120 verified violent incidents took place each month in these two provinces between June 2017 and June 2019. Taking population density into account, this rate of violence was higher than in Yemen or Nigeria's Borno State in 2018.¹⁵ The Secretary-General's report covering March through June of 2019 reported a "relatively stable" security situation during the reporting period, but noted marked deteriorations in security in the Masisi, Beni, and Butembo areas of North Kivu, as well as in the Djugu and Mahagi territories of Ituri Province and the Kalehe and Fizi territories of South Kivu.¹⁶

Since the transfer of power from Kabila to Tshisekedi, a number of non-state armed groups have signaled their willingness to consider demobilizing. While these overtures present an important opportunity to reduce armed group violence in the DRC, the gains from demobilization are unlikely to be significant in the short term. The emerging demobilization demands of many armed groups are unrealistic, unsafe, or unlikely to be palatable to the Congolese government and international community. Moreover, the national DDR program stagnated under Kabila. Many demobilized combatants were left indefinitely in cantonment sites, and inadequate reintegration programs have prompted many demobilized combatants to rejoin armed groups.¹⁷ The current administration will need to develop a national plan for reforming all aspects of DDR, and funding for reintegration programs needs to be committed. Such programs will take time to initiate. In the short term, movement of armed groups toward demobilization could actually trigger additional insecurity for civilians.¹⁸ "There are communities in the immediate vicinity of where they are demobilizing with bored, broke, and hungry soldiers...so you have huge protection risks," observed a MONUSCO civilian official.¹⁹

Addressing non-state armed group violence will not necessarily lead to a decrease in the number of violations committed by the Congolese national army (FARDC) or national police force (PNC). State security forces are routinely responsible for over half of the violations committed against civilians in the DRC.²⁰ "The same [security] actors that people should be relying on are engaging in human rights violations," summarized a MONUSCO civilian official.²¹ Addressing these violations will require serious and sustained investment in security sector reform as well as building the capacity and resources of Congolese actors to protect civilians

and mitigate harm to civilians in their own operations. There are many politically and socially active civil society groups in the DRC, including robust women-led and gender-focused groups, who present a strong opportunity for change. If properly engaged, they can support the DDR and SSR efforts of international and government actors.

Protection efforts of peacekeepers and humanitarian and development actors in eastern DRC have also been complicated by a number of health emergencies in the country.²² On August 1, 2018, Congolese health officials declared an Ebola outbreak in eastern DRC. Nearly 3,000 people have been diagnosed with the virus since then, and over 2,000 infected individuals have died. International and national health workers have managed to contain outbreaks in some cities, including the major regional hub of Goma. But they have struggled to contain the disease in the Ituri and Beni provinces, where armed groups control large tracts of territory and communities suffering from countless other health and protection concerns are deeply suspicious of and angered by interventions that only target Ebola.

Over the coming months, insecurity could be further triggered by political and ethnic rivalries at the local level. The Congolese constitution outlines a process for holding local and municipal elections, which are currently scheduled to take place during 2019 and 2020. Stakeholders who spoke with CIVIC were skeptical that local elections would actually be held during this period. However, they recognized that these elections, if held, could be a significant flashpoint for intercommunal and localized political conflict.²³

III. EVALUATING A SHRINKING MONUSCO PRESENCE

"If you are drawing down, if you close bases, there are impacts—and Member States need to be aware of those impacts."²⁴

Throughout its existence, protection of civilians has remained a core part of MONUSCO's mandate, as well as that of its predecessor, MONUC. However, the number of peacekeepers deployed in the DRC has fluctuated over time. At its peak, the Mission was authorized to have 19,815 troops deployed in country alongside thousands of police and civilian personnel. Even at its maximum strength, MONUSCO was overstretched by the scale and number of conflicts threatening civilians. By 2016, the Mission had opened small bases around the country to respond to an increasing number of threats against civilians, and it was struggling to resupply and staff these bases with

enough peacekeepers to have a meaningful impact on the security environment. To resolve this problem, MONUSCO's military leadership proposed a plan for transforming its military component by reducing the number of remote bases and increasing the mobility of its peacekeepers.²⁵

Then, in 2017, the UN Security Council lowered MONUSCO's troop ceiling by 3,600, and the budgetary committee of the General Assembly reduced its operational budget by almost \$100 million. MONUSCO was caught off guard by the extent of these reductions. With fewer resources and an increase in conflict around the country, the Mission adopted a new strategy for protection called "protection through projection." This model accelerated and expanded the previous transformation plan. It required MONUSCO to close additional bases across the east of the country and replace regular framework troops with rapidly deployable battalions (RDBs). Framework troops often have agreements in place that require them to be housed in hard-walled accommodations, and they may not have training or equipment to support lengthy deployments in remote areas. By contrast, RDBs can launch out to remote areas in what the Mission terms standing combat deployments (SCDs), which can sustain a remote presence for several weeks without the infrastructure of a base. MONUSCO has not yet conducted an in-depth review of the protection through projection model, but CIVIC's research has identified some challenges to mobility that can help inform MONUSCO planning and Member State decision-making on future budgets and transformations.²⁶

According to peacekeepers, the increased mobility of RDBs allows MONUSCO to reach areas that its patrols were not able to access before, including some areas that are inaccessible to humanitarians or difficult for humanitarians to reach.²⁷ Peacekeepers, humanitarian actors, and civil society leaders shared examples with CIVIC of times when MONUSCO was able to successfully prevent or respond to violence through mobile deployments. For example, when MONUSCO deployed a number of SCDs to conflict-affected areas of Ituri in early 2018, humanitarians and civil society actors credited the deployment with stemming violence and contributing to improved security, which encouraged the return of displaced civilians.²⁸ Ahead of elections, MONUSCO also deployed mobile units to political hotspots around the country—a move that several peacekeepers told CIVIC likely prevented political violence.²⁹ Then, after a December 2018 outbreak of violence in Yumbi left hundreds dead in a span of days, MONUSCO deployed an SCD that helped to discourage further violence and facilitated a human rights investigation into violations.³⁰

However, stakeholders who spoke with CIVIC in the DRC were concerned that transformations in MONUSCO's operations over the last several years have been "expenditure driven and not operational needs driven."³¹ Moreover, they expressed that while mobility can have benefits, it is not a good model for responding to threats in high-risk areas and locations where armed groups remain entrenched. One MONUSCO military official summarized, "In the wake of the budget cuts, there was no choice but to go to protection through projection. The major problem is that the security situation is not yet under control."³² Echoing these sentiments, a MONUSCO civilian official said, "Protection through projection is not a magic bullet like some people have tried to present it."³³

Member States and the Mission should take into account the benefits and challenges that arose during the initial implementation of protection through projection as they plan for the future of MONUSCO. For example, CIVIC's research demonstrates that mobile deployments are heavily dependent on air assets and can be delayed weeks or even months when helicopters are unavailable to support a deployment.³⁴ As a MONUSCO military official explained, "The more you reduce your foot[print] on the ground, the more you need aviation to project. ...If reduction of forces and increases in air assets isn't happening simultaneously, the requirements of protection through projection are not being met."³⁵ MONUSCO officials also warned that progressively losing presence around the country would affect their ability to maintain situational awareness.³⁶

Another challenge to the implementation of protection through projection model is that, in many areas, the violence prompting MONUSCO to deploy SCDs cannot be quickly resolved. The short timeframe envisioned for SCDs limits the ability of peacekeepers to build local capacities during their deployments, and MONUSCO struggles to withdraw personnel once they have been deployed. SCDs that are meant to remain for three weeks but stay in place for several months can become expensive to resupply and maintain.³⁷ Some humanitarians also raised concerns that when SCDs do withdraw quickly after launching, the short-term deployments can "create more risks because they create a sense of security and then leave."³⁸ In some cases, there have been reprisal attacks by armed groups against civilians after the Mission withdraws.³⁹

Stakeholders who spoke with CIVIC also identified a number of lessons learned from the base closure process that has accompanied downsizing in some areas of the country. For example, the timeline for base closures in the past—which has ranged from one to three months in most cases—has been insufficient. This

“Everything has changed since the closure of the MONUSCO base. ... The situation has deteriorated, abuses have increased, and physical and sexual violence are deployed every day here.”

— Civil Society Leader

time frame has not allowed MONUSCO to adequately reinforce local protection capacities or communicate its plan for closures to communities, despite efforts of the Civil Affairs section to do so.⁴⁰ Although MONUSCO often consults with humanitarian actors and government authorities to identify which actors can scale up their protection-related activities ahead of base closures, the short time frame is not sufficient for humanitarians to meaningfully adjust their operational plans or assume protection-related roles previously carried out by MONUSCO. Describing a past situation in which humanitarian and development agencies were asked to assume additional protection roles in the wake of base closures, one humanitarian actor said, “It was really unfair for [humanitarians] to be asked to

do this with zero extra funds, so in the end, it was lip service. ... Let’s hope [in the future] it is done in a more accountable and transparent way.”⁴¹

In many of the areas in North Kivu where MONUSCO shuttered its bases in 2017, the security environment has deteriorated. Civilians in Masisi and Nyabiondo who spoke with CIVIC in May of 2019 reported an increase in the frequency and severity of armed group activity, armed group activity closer to or within major population centers, and the creation of new armed groups since the MONUSCO bases closed in these towns.⁴² For example, a civil society leader in Masisi told CIVIC, “Everything has changed since the closure of the MONUSCO base. ... The situation has deteriorated, abuses have increased, and physical and sexual violence are deployed every day here.”⁴³

Many civilians living in Masisi and Nyabiondo are displaced persons who fled to these towns because their home villages were overrun by armed groups and the MONUSCO presence offered them a safe haven. Since the base closures, however, they describe a situation in which they are desperate, encircled by armed groups without any actor to provide protection. One woman who originally fled to Nyabiondo to seek protection from MONUSCO told CIVIC, “Now it is hell. I tell you we live in hell here. We do not know when and how the enemies will come, but we know that at every moment, the rebels can come and hurt us.”⁴⁴ Echoing this sentiment, a woman whose father was abducted and killed by armed groups in Nyabiondo said, “Today we are in a living hell, everything has changed. The rebels have set up a position here and they killed my father during that time. ... If MONUSCO was still here, my father would not have been killed like that.”⁴⁵ A mother of three exclaimed, “[MONUSCO] left us in the hands of armed groups on the pretext that the FARDC will protect us ... this army that deals and collaborates with the armed groups.”⁴⁶ Overall, civilians in Masisi and Nyabiondo expressed a sense of desperation and of having been abandoned by MONUSCO and the international community.⁴⁷ “MONUSCO, by closing the base here and Masisi, they simply abandoned us,” said a young woman living in Nyabiondo.⁴⁸

Without MONUSCO present to offer protection and political support, human rights advocates and civil society leaders have struggled to continue monitoring and denouncing armed group violations.⁴⁹ In both Masisi and Nyabiondo, civil society leaders who regularly reported threats to MONUSCO through a community alert network (CAN) told CIVIC that they stopped sharing information this way because the phone lines for MONUSCO personnel stopped working and because MONUSCO was no longer responsive to their alerts.⁵⁰ “There was a number, which we called

every time a threat was felt here or elsewhere, and it was a good way to communicate with MONUSCO. Today it no longer exists, and we ended up erasing this number in our phones,” explained a civil society leader in Masisi.⁵¹ A second civil society leader lamented, “I have stopped reporting. Reporting is exposing oneself to threats and even death. I am very sorry for my silence, but that is the reality. There is no protection mechanism for activists who denounce [violations].”⁵² In the case of Nyabiondo, some members of a local protection committee created by MONUSCO before its departure were later forced to flee after armed actors targeted several members of their committee.⁵³

Since the 2017 reductions in MONUSCO’s troop strength and budget, the Mission has continued to reduce its presence and activities. The Secretary-General’s proposed budget for MONUSCO’s 2019/2020 operations was significantly lower than its funding for the previous year. The reduced budget request was based on a plan to prioritize the Mission’s areas of activity by refocusing attention on the east while closing bases in Kisangani and Lubumbashi as well as small antenna offices in the west of the country. The budget also took into account plans to reduce the number of troops deployed in country to several thousand fewer than the approved troop ceiling. Longer term, the Mission aspires to adopt a phased withdrawal process, exiting first from Tanganyika, Maniema, Ituri, and the two Kasai provinces where it is currently operational before leaving its final footholds in North Kivu and South Kivu. At the time of CIVIC’s research, MONUSCO officials were discussing withdrawal from some provinces in as few as 12 to 18 months.⁵⁴

The budget and plan for downsizing MONUSCO were drafted in 2018, ahead of the presidential election. Some interlocutors told CIVIC that the Mission’s leadership decided to propose a budget reduction and downsizing because Kabila’s administration was applying intense political pressure on them to withdraw from the DRC—and MONUSCO assumed Kabila’s political party would win the 2018 presidential election and pursue similar policies.⁵⁵ MONUSCO’s decision to significantly reduce the 2019/2020 budget request was also driven by an expectation that Member States would inevitably impose reductions. The Mission wanted to proactively decide where to cut costs rather than leaving decision-making on reductions to the UN General Assembly’s Fifth Committee, which negotiates peacekeeping budgets. The Mission opted to construct a coherent plan for prioritizing operations in the east, concentrating its reduced troop and personnel levels in these regions rather than continuing to stretch the Mission thinly across a massive country with an ever-shrinking pool of funds.⁵⁶ A MONUSCO civilian official explained, “At the end of the day, it is not what we think

we need, but what people will pay for. ...If [they] want this level of budget cuts, that is the price. We no longer have the ability to respond to threats in these parts of the country.”⁵⁷

When CIVIC was carrying out research for this report, it was too early to fully assess the impact of the 2019 MONUSCO base closures in Lubumbashi and Kisangani or the Mission’s antenna locations in the west. However, these areas are much less volatile than the east. Many stakeholders, including humanitarians and civil society leaders, expressed to CIVIC that closures in these areas, as well as MONUSCO’s decision to focus on the east, comprised a logical plan to prioritize resources and activities where the security situation is the most dire.⁵⁸ MONUSCO officials also reasoned that maintaining the antenna offices in the west was not a good use of financial resources because they required MONUSCO to employ large numbers of administrative staff to support very few substantive personnel.⁵⁹ Moreover, some MONUSCO officials and humanitarians voiced their belief to CIVIC that much of the work needed to reduce conflict and improve protection in the DRC is now in the realm of the peacebuilding, governance, and development spheres. They argued that international funding should begin shifting from peacekeeping to these efforts.⁶⁰

Nevertheless, humanitarians and MONUSCO officials expressed concern that the latest round of closures could leave MONUSCO blind to early warning signs of violence.⁶¹ Lubumbashi, in particular, is an area with important political significance that could experience political tensions or violence in the future. Because of these concerns, the Joint Human Rights Office left behind several national staff officers in Lubumbashi and Kisangani to continue monitoring violations in these areas. They were able to do so, in part, because they function jointly as a component of MONUSCO and as a member of the UN Country Team.⁶² These officers are helping MONUSCO maintain an understanding of potential threats—a practice that could be replicated in other areas as MONUSCO gradually shrinks its presence. However, stakeholders should be aware that without the support of other sections, equipment, and air assets, human rights officers will be unable to engage politically with key actors in these regions, maintain the same level of investigations, or launch regular operational responses to emerging threats.

Finally, stakeholders warned that further drawdown in areas still troubled by insecurity could trigger a resurgence of violence, forcing the Mission to return to these areas after withdrawal.⁶³ “The rush to the exit door right after the election, if they continue like this, they risk that it blows up in their face,” explained one DRC expert.⁶⁴ Many stakeholders who spoke with CIVIC

felt that the Mission's projected timelines for drawdown and withdrawal are too rapid and not fully aligned with conflict analyses of the situation.⁶⁵ As one MONUSCO civilian official reflected, "Overall, the narrative is that in three years, we would be out. The question is, is it quick or overdue? It goes back to your question of what is driving cuts. Certainly not the operating environment."⁶⁶

IV. PLANNING AN EXIT FOR MONUSCO

***"Sometimes when a peacekeeping mission is doing something and stops doing that thing, no one has the money or political space or capacity to take a task on."*⁶⁷**

Charting an exit for MONUSCO requires identifying the end goals that the Mission needs to reach before it can safely withdraw and setting priority activities that the Mission should focus on to achieve them. To prevent an exit that threatens international peace and security or endangers the lives of civilians, the UN Security Council (UNSC) should link plans for MONUSCO's withdrawal to specific, measurable benchmarks that evaluate the security environment. Peacekeepers and humanitarians who spoke with CIVIC recommended that benchmarks include levels of armed group violence, human rights violations, protection threats to civilians, the strength of Congolese institutions and protection frameworks, and the level of trust that Congolese civilians have in national institutions and security actors.⁶⁸ A number of indicators in these areas are already being measured by MONUSCO through its results-based budget and through the work plans of field offices and individual sections.

An initiative called the Comprehensive Planning and Performance Assessment System (CPAS) is also being rolled out in many peacekeeping missions.⁶⁹ If CPAS is implemented by MONUSCO in a timely manner, the Mission could ensure that the indicators it develops for CPAS include factors related to insecurity and violence. These indicators can also act as benchmarks to evaluate whether the environment is conducive to MONUSCO's withdrawal. Another important variable for Mission planning is civilian perceptions of government institutions and security forces. MONUSCO has a partnership with the Harvard Humanitarian Initiative (HHI) to conduct surveys on civilian perceptions of security in the North Kivu, South Kivu, and Ituri provinces. HHI surveys could help the Mission and the UNSC assess whether civilian confidence in security actors and government institutions is improving.⁷⁰

A key challenge to establishing benchmarks will be determining what level of security is good enough to warrant reductions in MONUSCO's presence. MONUSCO can tackle this challenge by consulting closely with Congolese government authorities and other political leaders in the country to determine what an appropriate end state for the Mission looks like. The Mission could also reinvigorate joint assessment with the government of the DRC to assess the specific security situation in territories affected by armed group violence and identify critical capacity gaps that need to be addressed in order to restore or build state authority. Involving civil society actors in a transparent dialogue on the desired end state of the Mission could help combat perceptions of abandonment and feelings of anger toward the Mission when it does draw down. Engaging civil society in conversations on the future of the country could also make clear to the government that benchmarks aim to improve governance and sustainable peace rather than narrowly focus on strengthening the government.

There have been numerous efforts over the last twenty years to broker agreements with or neutralize armed non-state actors, improve the performance of security actors, support the extension of state authority, and strengthen the rule of law and state institutions. Clear benchmarks with associated timelines could help hold the government accountable for demonstrating real progress in order to secure continued engagement of donors and governments. While having some flexibility in this drawdown process can be helpful, it is important for UNSC members to set "red lines" related to insecurity and risks of violence against civilians that will trigger a delay or pause in the Mission's drawdown and withdrawal if necessary.

One of the largest barriers preventing MONUSCO from reaching an end state where it can safely reduce its presence is the absence of a credible actor to provide physical protection to civilians as it withdraws. DDR and SSR initiatives involving army and police reform are therefore key issues that need to be addressed. While past efforts by international actors to support SSR have had limited impact, president Tshisekedi has signaled a new willingness to invest in these efforts, which should be capitalized on.⁷¹ MONUSCO has an important role to play in both of these areas. For example, MONUSCO can use its influence to advocate for government commitment to SSR. It can also help coordinate the reform efforts of other actors to prevent piecemeal training, which creates different standards and frameworks across the national security forces.⁷² As one civil society leader lamented, "With reform of the FARDC, it is a problem. There has been no coordination. ...We need coordination of trainers and for the government to be clear on what they

need for the military.”⁷³ Over the years, MONUSCO has also supported the development of local forums for engagement between state security forces and civil society leaders. These forums have helped provide oversight to security operations and ensure that national security forces are accountable and responsive. MONUSCO should continue building the capacity of these groups and cementing them within national systems.

MONUSCO’s current mandate tasks it to “prevent the expansion of all armed groups, neutralize these groups, and disarm them.”⁷⁴ Civilians who spoke with CIVIC emphasized the importance of MONUSCO’s role in combatting armed groups,⁷⁵ but stakeholders also stressed the need for neutralization efforts to be multidimensional, rather than primarily military.⁷⁶ Over the past several years, MONUSCO officials have begun developing tailored armed group strategies based on in-depth analysis of different armed group tactics. These strategies outline a comprehensive—rather than exclusively military—approach to reducing armed group violations. MONUSCO should continue to invest in and implement these comprehensive and tailored approaches to neutralizing armed groups. As one MONUSCO civilian official explained, DDR efforts need to be “well programed and based on political economy analysis of how we deal with vested interests.”⁷⁷ Successful demobilization of some armed groups will require MONUSCO to link field-based efforts with the political engagement of powerbrokers in Kinshasa and regional capitals, as these powerbrokers often manipulate armed conflict from a distance.⁷⁸ For armed groups with international links, MONUSCO will need to coordinate with regional envoys, including the UN Office of the Special Envoy for the Great Lakes. These envoys can help engage key political actors in neighboring countries in the demobilization process.⁷⁹ If the government invests seriously in reforming DDR programs, MONUSCO can also work with the government to establish guidelines for DDR that are gender-sensitive, respect international laws, and incorporate protection principles.⁸⁰

Although MONUSCO has important roles to play on SSR and DDR, bilateral engagement by Member States and donors on these issues will be equally important, if not more so.⁸¹ Member States and regional blocs like the European Union are better placed to provide training to security forces and can also apply sustained pressure on the government of the DRC and other regional actors to address armed group threats. In addition, reducing violence from community-based self-defense groups without strong international links will require increased funding and programming for local development and reintegration initiatives that create viable social and economic opportunities for

youth and demobilized combatants.⁸² In the past, MONUSCO’s efforts to support security sector reform and the demobilization of armed groups have been undermined by corruption, the vested interests of actors who profit from the current system, and a government lacking political will to make progress in these areas. Ultimately, the ability of MONUSCO, donors, non-governmental organizations, and regional actors to address SSR and DDR will depend on the willingness of the government to champion these issues. It will also depend on the ability of donors and other international actors to identify the underlying incentive systems that perpetuate armed groups and to push for concrete improvements.⁸³

To minimize potential protection gaps, any plan to drawdown MONUSCO’s presence should be accompanied by a parallel increase in protection and development work by other state and non-state actors in affected areas. Some INGOs have already invested in local community alert systems, and the government Conseil de protection civile (CPC) department within the Ministry of Interior also monitors alerts where it has staff and capacity to do so.⁸⁴ MONUSCO should undertake a comprehensive mapping of existing alert networks to identify areas where it can safely build capacity. To strengthen CANs and local protection committees (LPCs), MONUSCO should widen and diversify its networks, ensure peacekeepers are proactively reaching out to community contacts, and redouble its support to the extension of commercial mobile phone networks, which it began while closing bases in 2017.⁸⁵ To improve the sustainability of CANs, MONUSCO could also help to build the capacity of the CPC and police officers to increase their work in these areas. However, until SSR efforts have begun to yield results, police are as likely to cause alerts as they are to respond to them.

Protection of civilians will need to remain a core part of MONUSCO’s mandate in the coming years. Nonetheless, increased funding and training that supports national and international humanitarian actors to undertake monitoring and programming related to the protection of civilians—without compromising funding for life-saving humanitarian assistance—could help minimize gaps in this function as MONUSCO draws down.⁸⁶ Development actors can, for example, focus on projects that improve governance or create livelihoods to support communities and demobilized combatants, while humanitarian actors can scale up their work monitoring and recording protection threats. Humanitarian funding for these activities is already stretched thin. The Humanitarian Response Plan for the DRC—which outlines a shared plan developed by humanitarian actors to meet needs in the country—was only 46% funded in 2018.⁸⁷ As of September 2019,

only 29.6% of the identified programming needs for the year had been funded.⁸⁸ To prevent a void after MONUSCO's departure, donors should ensure that funding does not exit the country as MONUSCO draws down, but is instead invested in humanitarian and development agencies.⁸⁹ The Congolese government should also begin investing more funding in protection activities currently supported by international organizations and actors. To avoid more serious gaps in protection-related programming, MONUSCO will need to coordinate with Congolese authorities and international and national non-governmental organizations to assess capacity and establish proper timelines for transitioning its activities to other actors.

Humanitarian and development actors who spoke with CIVIC identified a number of areas where they rely directly or indirectly on MONUSCO and where capacity will need to be strengthened as MONUSCO plans for an exit. Among humanitarian and development actors, there are different stances on how closely non-governmental agencies should coordinate with peacekeepers in different areas, including information-sharing, use of armed escorts, and use of Mission assets to reach remote locations. UN agencies have to comply with UN security protocols and, as such, may not be able to travel to some areas of the country without accompaniment by the Force component of the Mission. UN agencies also operate under an integrated leadership structure with the Mission and therefore may need to engage in closer coordination and planning with MONUSCO to achieve common objectives. However, many non-UN humanitarian actors rely on their organizations' independence and impartiality—as outlined in humanitarian principles—to maintain community acceptance and access in conflict-affected areas. They are critical of other humanitarian and development actors' overreliance on military escorts and view direct coordination or collaboration with MONUSCO as a threat to their operations.⁹⁰

Nevertheless, humanitarians and MONUSCO officials acknowledged to CIVIC that MONUSCO's presence in insecure areas creates a hub of stability that can make it easier for humanitarians to maintain compounds and carry out operations in the same or nearby areas.⁹¹ As one humanitarian actor explained, "Having them patrolling does secure us and make our access more easy, even if it shouldn't."⁹² Speaking about MONUSCO's drawdown, another humanitarian actor said, "What is clear is that it is going to have a huge impact on humanitarians." He added, "MONUSCO provides a security guarantee implicitly to humanitarians and as it draws down, that is going to be a challenge."⁹³

Additionally, stakeholders emphasized to CIVIC that MONUSCO's Joint Human Rights Office plays a key role in monitoring human rights violations in the country. It manages the international Monitoring, Analysis, and Reporting Arrangements on conflict-related sexual violence (MARA), as well as the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism on grave violations of children's rights in situations of armed conflict (MRM).⁹⁴ "For us, human rights [officers] are very important in terms of documentation and pushing for access to justice and [an end to] impunity" summarized one humanitarian actor.⁹⁵ Besides monitoring these violations, MONUSCO carries out political engagement at the national and local levels to reduce the number of violations. At the national level, MONUSCO has been supporting the development of government strategies to address violations.⁹⁶ At the local level, the Mission often intervenes to combat FARDC and PNC abuses and pushes for accountability when violations occur. Civilians and civil society leaders who spoke with CIVIC emphasized how important these efforts are for curtailing violations and reinforcing their own advocacy against security force abuses.⁹⁷ Because the Mission sometimes acts as an interlocutor between humanitarian actors and Congolese security forces, humanitarian and development actors may need to strengthen their capacity on access negotiation and engagement with armed state and non-state actors as MONUSCO draws down.⁹⁸ Several humanitarians also emphasized the importance of the regular presence of humanitarian actors in field locations to secure the trust of communities and continued access despite insecurity.

Some humanitarian actors also rely on MONUSCO logistical support, including MONUSCO flights. Logistical support from the Mission has been particularly important to the medical and humanitarian response to the Ebola outbreak. Humanitarian and development agencies may need to reinforce their logistical capabilities over the coming years, and they will need support from donors to do so.

Many humanitarian actors, civil society leaders, and peacekeepers who spoke with CIVIC advocated for the human rights and political functions of MONUSCO to continue even after other components of the Mission are closed out. This practice would be in line with what has happened in many other countries, where peacekeeping operations have transitioned into special political missions or policing missions with rule of law and human rights monitoring functions.

CIVIC's research across mission contexts, including the DRC, has identified some key capabilities that are critical to effective assessment, planning, and decision-making on protection of civilians and will be valuable

as MONUSCO draws down.⁹⁹ For example, strategic planning officers and Force planners are already few in number and are tasked with critical and extensive responsibilities. Field-based coordinators and analysts are vital to maintaining integrated and effective operations.¹⁰⁰ The work of women protection advisors, currently playing a key role in MONUSCO, will continue to be important for ensuring that government reforms paving the way for a MONUSCO drawdown include substantive initiatives to combat sexual and gender-based violence and to empower women politically. The Mission, Secretariat, and Member States should ensure that these capabilities are maintained at current levels or even increased during drawdown. Several MONUSCO officials also emphasized that, while the instinct of the UN is often to reduce evenly across sections, the Mission should maintain or increase the number of military observers and community liaison assistants (CLAs) to preserve situational awareness while it reduces troop levels and field presence.¹⁰¹

Similarly, an exit strategy for MONUSCO might require temporarily increasing the Mission's DDR, mediation, protection, or rule of law capacity so that MONUSCO can support government efforts to demobilize armed groups, as well as strengthen institutions and Congolese accountability processes. The Secretariat should consider whether it is able to support these sectors of the Mission with surge capacity from headquarters. MONUSCO will need to continue budgeting for posts that cover core functions included in the mandate, such as protection officers and women protection advisors, and Member States should adequately fund posts to implement the mandates they approve.

V. CONCLUSION

UN peacekeepers have been continuously deployed in the DRC for 20 years. The length of the deployment, recurrent insecurity and humanitarian crises, and the sometimes slow progress of building peace and security has led to fatigue among Member States and donors. This weariness is understandable, and placing pressure on missions to develop exit strategies and prioritize their activities can drive positive change. Yet there are still a number of hurdles that need to be overcome for the DRC to achieve durable peace, and MONUSCO's protection efforts remain crucial in the meantime. With limited support from the Congolese government in the past, MONUSCO has struggled to ensure that its efforts are sustainable. However, the January 2019 change in government presents an opportunity that the UNSC and MONUSCO should capitalize on. As one UN official noted, "it is not the time to say good luck and pack up."¹⁰² This is a time

to evaluate what a successful end to MONUSCO's mandate will look like, what failures from past drawdowns can be avoided, where the Mission has been successful, and which Mission activities should be reinforced to achieve an exit that does not leave civilians trapped between violent armed groups and abusive state security forces.

Reductions to MONUSCO's budget over the past several years have spurred base closures and an increased reliance on mobility. While recent closures in the west of the country may prove an effective way for MONUSCO to prioritize and refocus on the most insecure provinces, past base closures in the east serve as an example of the risks that can arise from a quick drawdown in areas where armed groups are still entrenched. In the coming years, MONUSCO will need to continue providing protection to civilians, developing tailored and comprehensive strategies to address armed group violence, monitoring human rights violations, building government and civil society capacity to monitor and respond to threats, and supporting national strategies to address violence and promote human rights.

Success will depend less on MONUSCO than on the willingness of the Congolese government to support reform efforts. Constructive and sustained diplomatic engagement with the Congolese government by Member States and regional actors will be vital in this regard. Moreover, bilateral engagement by Member States and renewed commitment from donors on SSR and DDR will be required to pave the way for a responsible MONUSCO exit. In addition, as MONUSCO draws down, funding should shift to the protection efforts of UN agencies, international and national non-governmental organizations, and some Congolese government agencies.

A rapid drawdown and withdrawal from the DRC would undermine the gains MONUSCO has made and have devastating consequences for civilians. Plans for MONUSCO's exit should remain linked to thorough analysis of the conflict environment, and timelines for drawdown should take into account the need to bridge large gaps in security sector reform, the necessity of demobilizing armed groups, and the importance of transitioning protection-related tasks to other actors in the DRC. The UNSC can avoid significant risks by linking MONUSCO's exit to benchmarks that evaluate the security environment and signal when civilians truly no longer need the protection of peacekeepers.

ENDNOTES

- 1 UN Security Council Resolution 2463, UN doc S/RES/2463 (2019), para 45.
- 2 In “The Declaration of Shared Commitments on UN Peacekeeping Operations,” 150 Member States and regional organizations pledged to “collectively commit to stronger engagement to advance political solutions to conflict and to pursue complementary political objectives and integrated strategies, including at national and regional levels, within our respective mandates and responsibilities. The declaration is available at <https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/dpko-dfs-declaration-shared-commitments-unpeacekeeping-1812605e.pdf>
- 3 CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #86, Masisi, May 2019.
- 4 Of the 44 civilians CIVIC interviewed for this report, 20 were women and 24 were men.
- 5 CIVIC interview with MONUSCO civilian official, #41, location withheld, March 2019.
- 6 CIVIC interview with MONUSCO civilian official, #66, conducted via Skype from Washington, DC to Goma, August 2019; CIVIC interview with UN official, #72, New York, September 2019; CIVIC interview with diplomat, #80, New York, September 2019. See also, “RDC: Qui sont les grands absents du nouveau gouvernement?,” RFI, August 26, 2019, <https://www.jeuneafrique.com/820387/politique/rdc-qui-sont-les-grands-absents-du-nouveau-gouvernement/>
- 7 Daniel Finnan, “DR Congo: Catholic Church says official results don’t match its tally,” RFI, January 10, 2019, <http://en.rfi.fr/africa/20190110-dr-congo-catholic-church-says-its-results-dont-match-those-electoral-commission>; Pierre Englebert, “Congo’s 2018 Elections: An analysis of Implausible Results,” *African Arguments*, <https://africanarguments.org/2019/01/10/drc-election-results-analysis-implausible/>.
- 8 See for example, “Update 3: New Congo government shows influence of former president,” *Reuters*, August 26, 2019, <https://af.reuters.com/article/commoditiesNews/idAFL5N25MOW7>.
- 9 CIVIC interview with MONUSCO civilian official, #11, Kinshasa, February 2019; CIVIC interview with MONUSCO civilian official, #21, Kinshasa, February 2019; CIVIC interview with MONUSCO civilian official, #22, Kinshasa, February 2019.
- 10 CIVIC interview with MONUSCO civilian official, #26, Goma, March 2019; CIVIC interview with MONUSCO civilian official, #41, location withheld, March 2019; CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #52, Goma, March 2019; CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #54, Goma, March 2019.
- 11 CIVIC interview with MONUSCO civilian official, #11, Kinshasa, February 2019.
- 12 CIVIC interview with MONUSCO civilian official, #11, Kinshasa, February 2019; CIVIC interview with humanitarian actor, #33, Goma, March 2019; CIVIC interview with MONUSCO civilian official, #41, location withheld, March 2019.
- 13 One dead as DR Congo police break up banned marches,” *France 24*, June 30, 2019, <https://www.france24.com/en/20190630-congo-protest-dead-banned-opposition-marches>;
- 14 “DR Congo: Police Fire on, Beat Protesters,” *Human Rights Watch*, July 4, 2019, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2019/07/04/dr-congo-police-fire-beat-protesters>.
- 15 “ACLED Fact Sheet: Conflict in the DRC,” ACLED, July 25, 2019, <https://www.acleddata.com/2019/07/25/fact-sheet-conflict-in-the-drc/>.
- 16 Congo Research Group, *Congo, Forgotten: The Numbers Behind Africa’s Longest Humanitarian Crisis*, August 2019.
- 17 “United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo: Report of the Secretary General,” July 17, 2019, UN doc S/2019/575, para 21.
- 18 Rift Valley Institute, *Recycling Rebels? Demobilization in the Congo*, March 2016.
- 19 CIVIC interview with MONUSCO civilian official, #21, Kinshasa, February 2019; CIVIC interview with MONUSCO civilian official, #26, Goma, March 2019; CIVIC interview with MONUSCO civilian official, #35, Goma, March 2019; CIVIC interview with MONUSCO civilian official, #49, Goma, March 2019; CIVIC interview with humanitarian actor, #63, conducted via Skype from Washington, DC to Kinshasa, April 2019.
- 20 CIVIC interview with MONUSCO civilian official, #49, Goma, March 2019.
- 21 See, for example, UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), *Human rights situation and the activities of the United Nations Joint Human Rights Office in the Democratic Republic of the Congo*, August 14, 2019, UN doc A/HRC/42/32.
- 22 CIVIC interview with MONUSCO civilian official, #41, location withheld, March 2019.
- 23 In addition to the spread of the Ebola virus, the DRC is facing the world’s largest measles epidemic, with over 3,500 people killed by measles in the first nine months of 2019. Over 12,000 cases of cholera were recorded in the first six months of 2019, with cases reported in 20 out of the DRC’s 26 provinces. “DRC: Vaccine Campaign for World’s Largest Measles Outbreak,” *BBC News*, September 26, 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-49836280>; “More than a million people to be vaccinated in phase 2 of a huge cholera vaccination campaign in the Democratic Republic of Congo,” *World Health Organization*, July 3, 2019, <https://www.afro.who.int/news/more-million-people-be-vaccinated-phase-2-huge-cholera-vaccination-campaign-democratic-republic-congo>
- 24 CIVIC interview with MONUSCO civilian official, #7, Kinshasa, February 2019; CIVIC interview with MONUSCO civilian official, #11, Kinshasa, February 2019; CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #31, Goma, March 2019; CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #52, Goma, March 2019.

24 CIVIC interview with UN official, #73, New York, September 2019.

25 For reporting on MONUSCO's Force transformation, see UNSC, "Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo," December 29, 2016, UN doc S/2016/1130, paras 65-67.

26 In addition to information provided in this policy brief from CIVIC's most recent interviews, see CIVIC, *Protection with Less Presence: How the Peacekeeping Operation in the Democratic Republic of Congo is Attempting to Deliver Protection with Fewer Resources*, January 2018.

27 CIVIC interview with MONUSCO civilian official, #11, Kinshasa, February 2019; CIVIC interview with humanitarian actor, #39, Goma, March 2019; CIVIC interview with humanitarian actor, #63, conducted via Skype from Washington, DC to Kinshasa, April 2019.

28 CIVIC, *Data-Driven Protection: Linking Threat Analysis to Planning in UN Peacekeeping Operations*, November 2018, 17-18.

29 CIVIC interview with MONUSCO civilian official, #11, Kinshasa, February 2019; CIVIC interview with MONUSCO civilian official, #26, Goma, March 2019.

30 CIVIC interview with UN official, #34, Goma, March 2019; CIVIC interview with MONUSCO civilian official, #35, Goma, March 2019; CIVIC interview with humanitarian actor, #39, Goma, March 2019; CIVIC interview with humanitarian actor, #63 conducted via Skype from Washington, DC to Kinshasa, April 2019.

31 CIVIC interview with MONUSCO military official, Goma, #58, March 2019.

32 CIVIC interview with MONUSCO military official, Goma, #57, March 2019.

33 CIVIC interview with MONUSCO civilian official, Goma, #43, March 2019.

34 CIVIC interview with MONUSCO civilian official, #43, Goma, March 2019; CIVIC interview with MONUSCO military official, #57, Goma, March 2019; CIVIC interview with MONUSCO military official, #58, Goma, March 2019.

35 CIVIC interview with MONUSCO military official, #57, Goma, March 2019.

36 CIVIC interview with MONUSCO civilian official, #25, Goma, March 2019; CIVIC interview with MONUSCO military official, #46, Goma, March 2019; CIVIC interview with MONUSCO military official, #57, Goma, March 2019; CIVIC interview with MONUSCO military official, #58, Goma, March 2019.

37 CIVIC interview with MONUSCO civilian official, #22, Kinshasa, February 2019; CIVIC interview with diplomat, #51, Goma, March 2019; CIVIC interview with MONUSCO civilian official, #66, conducted via Skype from Washington, DC to Goma, August 2019.

38 CIVIC interview with humanitarian actor, #18, Kinshasa, February 2019.

39 CIVIC interview with humanitarian actor, #18, Kinshasa, February 2019; CIVIC interview with MONUSCO civilian official, #48, Goma, March 2019; CIVIC email communication with MONUSCO civilian official, October 2019.

40 CIVIC, *Protection with Less Presence*, January 2018.

41 CIVIC interview with humanitarian actor, #56, Goma, March 2019.

42 CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #81, Masisi, May 2019; CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #82, Masisi, May 2019; CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #83, Masisi, May 2019; CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #84, Masisi, May 2019; CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #85, Masisi, May 2019; CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #86, Masisi, May 2019; CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #87, Masisi, May 2019; CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #88, Masisi, May 2019; CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #89, Masisi, May 2019; CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #90, Masisi, May 2019; CIVIC interview with civilian, #91, Nyabiondo, May 2019; CIVIC interview with civilian, #92, Nyabiondo, May 2019; CIVIC interview with civilian, #94, Nyabiondo, May 2019; CIVIC interview with civilian, #96, Nyabiondo, May 2019; CIVIC interview with civilian, #97, Nyabiondo, May 2019; CIVIC interview with civilian, #98, Nyabiondo, May 2019; CIVIC interview with civilian, #99, Nyabiondo, May 2019; CIVIC interview with civilian, #100, Nyabiondo, May 2019; CIVIC interview with civilian, #101, Nyabiondo, May 2019; CIVIC interview with civilian, #102, Nyabiondo, May 2019; CIVIC interview with civilian, #103, Masisi, May 2019; CIVIC interview with civilian, #104, Masisi, May 2019; CIVIC interview with civilian, #105, Masisi, May 2019; CIVIC interview with civilian, #106, Masisi, May 2019; CIVIC interview with civilian, #107, Masisi, May 2019; CIVIC interview with civilian, #108, Masisi, May 2019; CIVIC interview with civilian, #109, Masisi, May 2019; CIVIC interview with civilian, #110, Masisi, May 2019; CIVIC interview with civilian, #111, Masisi, May 2019; CIVIC interview with civilian, #112, Masisi, May 2019; CIVIC interview with civilian, #113, Masisi, May 2019; CIVIC interview with civilian, #114, Masisi, May 2019.

43 CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #83, Masisi, May 2019.

44 CIVIC interview with civilian, #98, Nyabiondo, May 2019.

45 CIVIC interview with civilian, #102, Nyabiondo, May 2019.

46 CIVIC interview with civilian, #97, Nyabiondo, May 2019.

47 CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #81, Masisi, May 2019; CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #86, Masisi, May 2019; CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #88, Masisi, May 2019; CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #90, Masisi, May 2019; CIVIC interview with civilian, #92, Nyabiondo, May 2019; CIVIC interview with civilian, #100, Nyabiondo, May 2019; CIVIC interview with civilian, #101, Nyabiondo, May 2019; CIVIC interview with civilian, #111, Masisi, May 2019; CIVIC interview with civilian, #112, Masisi, May 2019; CIVIC interview with civilian, #113, Masisi, May 2019.

48 CIVIC interview with civilian, #92, Nyabiondo, May 2019.

49 CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #81, Masisi, May 2019; CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #82, Masisi, May 2019; CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #83, Masisi, May 2019; CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #84, Masisi, May 2019; CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #85, Masisi, May 2019; CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #86, Masisi, May 2019; CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #87, Masisi, May 2019; CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #88, Masisi, May 2019; CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #90, Masisi, May 2019.

50 CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #81, Masisi, May 2019; CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #82, Masisi, May 2019; CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #83, Masisi, May 2019; CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #84, Masisi, May 2019; CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #85, Masisi, May 2019; CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #86, Masisi, May 2019; CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #87, Masisi, May 2019; CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #88, Masisi, May 2019; CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #89, Masisi, May 2019; CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #90, Masisi, May 2019.

51 CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #90, Masisi, May 2019.

52 CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #86, Masisi, May 2019.

53 CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #135, Masisi, May 2019; CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #136, Masisi, May 2019; CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #137, Masisi, May 2019; CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #138, Masisi, May 2019; CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #139, Masisi, May 2019.

54 CIVIC interview with MONUSCO civilian official #2, Kinshasa, February 2019; CIVIC interview with MONUSCO civilian official, #14, Kinshasa, February 2019; CIVIC interview with MONUSCO civilian official, #20, Kinshasa, February 2019; CIVIC interview with MONUSCO civilian official, #22, Kinshasa, February 2019; CIVIC interview with MONUSCO civilian official, #26, Goma, March 2019; CIVIC interview with MONUSCO civilian official, #65, conducted via Skype from Washington, DC to Kinshasa, August 2019; CIVIC interview with MONUSCO civilian official, #66, conducted via Skype from Washington, DC to Goma, August 2019.

55 CIVIC interview with UNPOL officer, #13, Kinshasa, February 2019; CIVIC interview with humanitarian actor, #33, Goma, March 2019; CIVIC interview with MONUSCO civilian official, #45, Goma, March 2019; CIVIC interview with diplomat, #50, Goma, March 2019.

56 CIVIC interview with humanitarian actor, #6, Kinshasa, February 2019; CIVIC interview with MONUSCO civilian official, #26, Goma, March 2019; CIVIC interview with humanitarian actor, #33, Goma, March 2019; CIVIC interview with MONUSCO civilian official #41, location withheld, March 2019; CIVIC interview with MONUSCO civilian official #49, Goma, March 2019.

57 CIVIC interview with MONUSCO civilian official, #26, Goma, March 2019.

58 CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #52, Goma, March 2019; CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #53, Goma, March 2019; CIVIC interview with humanitarian actor, #63, conducted via Skype from Washington, DC to Kinshasa, April 2019.

59 CIVIC interview with MONUSCO civilian official, #14, Kinshasa, February 2019; CIVIC interview with MONUSCO civilian official, #22, Kinshasa, February 2019; CIVIC interview with UN official, conducted via WhatsApp from Washington, DC to New York, August 2019; CIVIC interview with MONUSCO civilian official, #65, conducted via Skype from Washington, DC to Kinshasa, August 2019.

60 CIVIC interview with MONUSCO civilian official, #26, Goma, March 2019; CIVIC interview with humanitarian actor, #44, Goma, March 2019; CIVIC interview with humanitarian actor, #56, Goma, March 2019; CIVIC interview with MONUSCO civilian official, #65, conducted via Skype from Washington, DC to Kinshasa, August 2019.

61 CIVIC interview with MONUSCO civilian official, #26, Goma, March 2019; CIVIC interview with MONUSCO civilian official, #41, location withheld, March 2019; CIVIC interview with humanitarian actor, #56, Goma, March 2019; CIVIC interview with humanitarian actor, #63, conducted via Skype from Washington, DC to Kinshasa, April 2019.

62 JHRO's unique status as a member of the UNCT, for example, allows them to more easily co-locate with UN agencies rather than operating out of a peacekeeping office or base and they are able to use UNHAS flights. For more information on the mandate and role of human rights components, see OHCHR, "Human Rights Components of Peacekeeping Missions," <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Countries/Pages/PeaceMissionsIndex.aspx>; MONUSCO, "Human Rights," <https://monusco.unmissions.org/en/human-rights>.

63 CIVIC interview with humanitarian actor, #15, Kinshasa, February 2019; CIVIC interview with
civil society leader, #31, Goma, March 2019; CIVIC interview with DRC expert, #61, conducted
via telephone from Washington, DC to New York, April 2019; CIVIC interview with UN official,
#77, New York, September 2019.

64 CIVIC interview with DRC expert, #61, conducted via telephone from Washington, DC to New
York, April 2019.

65 CIVIC interview with MONUSCO civilian official, #2, Kinshasa, February 2019; CIVIC interview
with humanitarian actor, #33, Goma, March 2019; CIVIC interview with DRC expert, #61, conducted
via telephone from Washington, DC to New York, April 2019.

66 CIVIC interview with MONUSCO civilian official, #2, Kinshasa, February 2019.

67 CIVIC interview with UN official, #64, via WhatsApp from Washington, DC to New York, August 2019.

68 CIVIC interview with MONUSCO military official, #57, Goma, March 2019; CIVIC interview with
UN official, #64, via WhatsApp from Washington, DC to New York, August 2019; CIVIC interview
with MONUSCO civilian official, #65, conducted via Skype from Washington, DC to Kinshasa,
August 2019; CIVIC interview with MONUSCO civilian official, #66, conducted via Skype from
Washington, DC to Goma, August 2019.

69 The goals of the CPAS initiative, which many Member States advocated for, are to ensure
operational plans are integrated and grounded in local context analysis and allow peacekeeping
missions to better assess the impact of their activities and operations in terms of their
mandated tasks and goals.

70 Additional information about the surveys and past poll data from the surveys is available at
<http://www.peacebuildingdata.org/research/drc/about-research>.

71 For an overview of SSR issues, see *The Democratic Republic of Congo: Taking a Stand on
Security Sector Reform*, April 2012, jointly authored and signed by Eastern Congo Initiative,
The Enough Project, European Network for Central Africa, International Federation for Human
Rights, Ecumenical Network for Central Africa, Open Society Initiative for Southern African, Refugees
International, UK All-Party Parliamentary Group on the Great Lakes Region of Africa, African
Association of Human Rights, Congolese Network for Security Sector Reform and Justice,
Groupe Lotus, League of Voters, and Pole Institute.

72 CIVIC interview with MONUSCO official, #1, conducted via WhatsApp from Washington, DC
to Kinshasa, February 2019; CIVIC interview with MONUSCO civilian official, #26, Goma, March
2019; CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #53, Goma, March 2019; CIVIC interview with UN
official, #64, via WhatsApp from Washington, DC to New York, August 2019.

73 CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #53, Goma, March 2019.

74 UN Security Council Resolution 2463, UN doc S/RES/2463 (2019), para 29 (i) (d).

75 CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #88, Masisi, May 2019; CIVIC interview with civil
society leader, #90, Masisi, May 2019; CIVIC interview with civilian, #91, Nyabiondo, May 2019; CIVIC
interview with civilian, #96, Nyabiondo, May 2019; CIVIC interview with civilian, #97, Nyabiondo, May
2019; CIVIC interview with civilian, #98, Nyabiondo, May 2019; CIVIC interview with civilian,
#99, Nyabiondo, May 2019; CIVIC interview with civilian, #102, Nyabiondo, May 2019; CIVIC
interview with civilian, #103, Nyabiondo, May 2019; CIVIC interview with civilian, #105, Masisi,
May 2019; CIVIC interview with civilian, #109, Masisi, May 2019; CIVIC interview with civilian, #111,
Masisi, May 2019; CIVIC interview with civilian, #113, Masisi, May 2019; CIVIC interview with
civilian, #114, Masisi, May 2019.

76 CIVIC interview with MONUSCO civilian official, #25, Goma, March 2019; CIVIC interview with
MONUSCO civilian official, #26, Goma, March 2019; CIVIC interview with civil society leader,
#53, Goma, March 2019.

77 CIVIC interview with MONUSCO civilian official, #26, Goma, March 2019.

78 CIVIC interview with MONUSCO civilian official, #26, Goma, March 2019; CIVIC interview with
civil society leader, #31, Goma, March 2019; CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #32,
Goma, March 2019; CIVIC interview with MONUSCO civilian official, #37, Goma, March 2019;
CIVIC interview with humanitarian actor, #56, Goma, March 2019; CIVIC interview with
MONUSCO civilian official, #66, conducted via Skype from Washington, DC to Goma, August 2019.

79 CIVIC interview with MONUSCO civilian official, #2, Kinshasa, February 2019; CIVIC interview
with MONUSCO civilian official, #26, Goma, March 2019; CIVIC interview with diplomat, #28,
Kinshasa, February 2019; CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #31, Goma, March 2019;
CIVIC interview with MONUSCO civilian official, #37, Goma, March 2019.

80 CIVIC interview with MONUSCO civilian official, #11, Kinshasa, February 2019; CIVIC interview
with civil society leader, #32, Goma, March 2019.

81 CIVIC interview with MONUSCO civilian official, #9, Kinshasa, February 2019; CIVIC interview
with MONUSCO civilian official, #26, Goma, March 2019; CIVIC interview with UN official, #64,
via WhatsApp from Washington, DC to New York, August 2019.

82 CIVIC interview with MONUSCO civilian official, #1, conducted via WhatsApp from Washington,
DC to Kinshasa, February 2019; CIVIC interview with MONUSCO civilian official, #25, Goma,
March 2019; CIVIC interview with MONUSCO civilian official, #26, Goma, March 2019; CIVIC
interview with humanitarian actor, #44, Goma, March 2019; CIVIC interview with MONUSCO
civilian official, #66, conducted via Skype from Washington, DC to Goma, August 2019.

83 CIVIC interview with MONUSCO civilian official, #22, Kinshasa, February 2019; CIVIC interview with MONUSCO civilian official, #26, Goma, March 2019; CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #31, Goma, March 2019; CIVIC interview with MONUSCO civilian official, #35, Goma, March 2019; CIVIC interview with MONUSCO civilian official, #37, Goma, March 2019; CIVIC interview with MONUSCO civilian official, #43, Goma, March 2019; CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #52, Goma, March 2019; CIVIC interview with UN official, #64, via WhatsApp from Washington, DC to New York, August 2019.

84 The Conseil de protection civile (CPC) was created by a 1996 legislative act. The stated mission of the council is to develop and implement a strategy, a plan of action, and management of disasters that have occurred or are likely to occur. *Décret n° 025 portant création du Conseil de protection civile, en abrégé «CPC»*, September 11, 1996, <http://www.leganet.cd/Legislation/Droit%20Public/Ordre/D.11.09.1996.htm>.

85 For example, MONUSCO provided commercial telecommunications companies with some logistical support to assess the feasibility of expanding telecommunications infrastructure to reach areas where telephone networks are currently unreliable. Among other benefits, MONUSCO officials hoped that this would allow CANS to continue functioning.

86 CIVIC interview with MONUSCO civilian official, #2, Kinshasa, February 2019; CIVIC interview with humanitarian actor, #56, Goma, March 2019; CIVIC interview with humanitarian actor, #62, via Skype from Washington, DC to Kinshasa, April 2019; CIVIC interview with UN official, #64, via WhatsApp from Washington, DC to New York, August 2019; CIVIC interview with MONUSCO civilian official, #65, conducted via Skype from Washington, DC to Kinshasa, August 2019.

87 UNOCHA, Democratic Republic of the Congo 2019 (Humanitarian Response Plan), <https://fts.unocha.org/appeals/673/summary>.

88 Ibid.

89 Shifting funding from peacekeeping to humanitarian and development activities will be a challenge. While most humanitarian and development activities are funded through voluntary contributions, UN peacekeeping missions are funded through assessed contributions of Member States. In Cote d'Ivoire, donors scaled down funding for development activities at the same time that the peacekeeping mission was drawing down, in part because of perceptions that the security situation had stabilized. In Liberia, the peacekeeping mission's exit has created a looming financial cliff. Efforts to map capacity gaps and establish a multi-donor trust fund to avoid this financial precipice have not been fully effective because of their late operationalization and donor fatigue. International Peace Institute (IPI), *Lessons Learned from the UN's transition in Cote d'Ivoire, December 2018*; IPI, *The Mission is Gone but the UN is Staying: Liberia's Peacekeeping Transition*, December 2018.

90 National guidelines on coordination between humanitarian actors and MONUSCO exist and provide a framework for engagement. Guidance states that, "As a general rule...humanitarian actors should not use MONUSCO's military assets," and it outlines exceptional circumstances of last resort in which use of such assets could be considered. UNOCHA, *National Guidelines for the Coordination between Humanitarian Actors and the United Nations Stabilization Mission in the DRC*, August 11, 2014, 6.

91 CIVIC interview with humanitarian actor, #6, Kinshasa, February 2019; CIVIC interview with humanitarian actor, #17, Kinshasa, February 2019; CIVIC interview with humanitarian actor, #39, Goma, March 2019.

92 CIVIC interview with humanitarian actor, #39, Goma, March 2019.

93 CIVIC interview with humanitarian actor, #6, Kinshasa, February 2019.

94 CIVIC interview with humanitarian actor, #6, Kinshasa, February 2019; CIVIC interview with MONUSCO civilian official, #35, Goma, March 2019; CIVIC interview with humanitarian actor, #63, via Skype from Washington, DC to Kinshasa, August 2019. The MARA and MRM are UN-led initiatives intended to ensure systematic, timely, and accurate tracking of violations that can promote action by the UNSC and national actors to combat these violations. For additional information about the mechanisms, see UN, "Monitoring, Analysis and Reporting Arrangements," <https://www.un.org/sexualviolenceinconflict/tools-for-action/mara/>; UNICEF, "Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM) on grave violations of children's rights in situations of armed conflict," https://www.unicef.org/protection/57929_57997.html.

95 CIVIC interview with humanitarian actor, #63, via Skype from Washington, DC to Kinshasa, August 2019.

96 CIVIC interview with MONUSCO civilian official, #9, Kinshasa, February 2019; CIVIC interview with MONUSCO civilian official, #47, conducted via telephone from Goma to Kinshasa, March 2019; CIVIC interview with MONUSCO civilian official, #59, conducted via telephone from Goma to Kinshasa, March 2019.

- 97 CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #82, Masisi, May 2019; CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #83, Masisi, May 2019; CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #85, Masisi, May 2019; CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #86, Masisi, May 2019; CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #88, Masisi, May 2019; CIVIC interview with civilian, #91, Nyabiondo, Masisi, May 2019; CIVIC interview with civilian, #100, Nyabiondo, Masisi, May 2019; CIVIC interview with civilian, #101, Nyabiondo, Masisi, May 2019; CIVIC interview with civilian, #103, Nyabiondo, Masisi, May 2019; CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #135, Masisi, May 2019; CIVIC interview with civil society leader, #136, Masisi, May 2019.
- 98 CIVIC interview with humanitarian actor, #15, Kinshasa, February 2019; CIVIC interview with humanitarian actor, #17, Kinshasa, February 2019; CIVIC interview with humanitarian actor, #33, Goma, March 2019; CIVIC interview with humanitarian actor, #60, conducted via Skype from Washington, DC to Goma, April 2019; CIVIC interview with humanitarian actor, #63, via Skype from Washington, DC to Kinshasa, August 2019.
- 99 CIVIC, *Data-Driven Protection*, November 2018.
- 100 Ibid.
- 101 Military observers are unarmed military officers deployed to monitor the security and humanitarian situation; CLAs are national staff members who lead on engaging civilians and maintaining CANS.
- 102 CIVIC interview with UN official, #77, New York, September 2019.

