



Engaging Society, Making a difference

INFORMATION NOTE ON THE SECURITY SITUATION IN EASTERN DRC

Period of 15th to 31st July 2022

NOTE N°3 - GREAT LAKES

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Summary

The reporting period was largely dominated by protests against MONUSCO in the North-Kivu following calls for Monusco's departure by some senior Congolese officials and civil society organizations, but also Congolese's frustration on the presence and role of Monusco in the last two decades.

1. Three peacekeepers and 12 Congolese civilians lost their lives during the protests in Goma and Butembo on July 25th and 26th, 2022.
2. The tension between Congolese population and Monusco heightened on July 31st, 2022, when peacekeepers of the Tanzanian contingent, returning from vacation, opened fire on the population in unclear circumstances at the Ugandan-Congolese border post of Kasindi. Two Congolese civilians were killed and 15 seriously wounded.

These incidents exasperated the feeling of distrust and rejection towards Monusco, qualified as helpless at best and as accomplice of the armed groups operating in Eastern DRC at worst.

Highlights of the reporting period.

3. On July 13th, 2022, during a press briefing, Mr. Patrick Muyaya, spokesperson of the Congolese government, condemned the remarks of the Monusco spokesperson on the M23 movement's firepower. He spoke of an admission of Monusco's weakness in the face of the M23 and its mission to protect Congolese civilians.
4. On July 14th, 2022, during Radio Okapi's "Dialogue entre congolais" talkshow, Mr. Mathias Gillman, Monusco spokesperson, denied Monusco's admission of powerlessness in the face of the M23, thus reacting to the remarks of the Congolese government spokesperson. He reaffirmed Monusco's commitment to fulfill its mission of protecting civilians.
5. On July 14th, 2022, a government delegation from the Democratic Republic of Congo led by Mr. Alexis Gisaro, Minister of Infrastructure, was received in audience by Ugandan President H.E. Yoweri Museveni. During this meeting, of which an extract was published on the President of Uganda's Twitter account, the Congolese delegation requested the active involvement of the President of Uganda in the search for a permanent solution to the crisis in Eastern DRC.

6. On July 22th, 2022, the first meeting of the DRC/Rwanda Joint Permanent Commission under the Luanda Roadmap was held in Luanda. The DRC and Rwanda were represented respectively by their foreign affairs ministers. Both parties called for the rapid deployment of the Regional Force, reiterated the call to the M23 for an immediate cessation of hostilities as well as the restoration of mutual trust between the two countries. The meeting was held in a cordial atmosphere according to the final communiqué.
7. On July 22th, 2022, during the 22nd Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State of the East African Community, H.E. Mr. Uhuru Kenyatta was appointed as facilitator of the Nairobi process on behalf of the East African Community and for the mobilization of funds to support its implementation.
8. On July 25th, 2022, at the opening ceremony of the 21st ordinary session of the Conference of Heads of State and Government of CEEAC, President Tshisekedi deplored the tensions between the DRC and Rwanda and wished a return to normalcy with the goodwill and determination of both parties.
9. On July 25th, 2022, at the call of some civil society organizations in North Kivu, the population demonstrated against the presence of Monusco. These demonstrations degenerated into looting and attacks on Monusco bases. These incidents resulted into the deaths of 12 Congolese civilians and 3 peacekeepers. Monusco deplored these incidents.
10. On July, 31st, 2022, returning from vacation via the Ugandan-Congolese border of Kasindi, elements of the Tanzanian contingent of Monusco opened fire on Congolese civilians who were preventing the convoy from entering Congolese territory. Two civilians were killed and 15 others injured. The Congolese government, through its spokesperson, strongly condemned this incident and said it is cooperating with Monusco to ensure that the perpetrators are punished.
11. The M23 still controls Bunagana.

Implementation of the Nairobi Agreement and the Luanda Road Map

More than a month after the summit of Heads of State of the East African Community held in Nairobi on 20 June 2022, the Regional Force has still not been deployed.

The Luanda roadmap seems to be moving forward with the first meeting of the Joint Permanent Commission in Luanda.

However, no concrete action on the ground has been observed and the M23 still controls the city of Bunagana and tensions are still high in the North Kivu.

The ADF rebellion, despite the interventions by the Ugandan army, continues to kill civilians in Beni.

Conclusion

In an already tense and potentially explosive environment, it is imperative that all parties involved in the DRC situation exercise restraint.

We believe that civil society organizations in DRC in particular but in the region as well can play a crucial role in the consolidation of peace and peaceful coexistence of communities in the region.

We call on the MONUSCO for the restoration of trust with the Congolese people.

We recall that a deterioration of the situation in the Eastern DRC could have potentially disastrous effects for the entire Great Lakes region.

We call on the government of the Democratic Republic of Congo and its partners to find a solution for the definitive eradication of the FDLR.