

**DRC: An intervention brigade within MONUSCO would require further human rights protection mechanisms** FIDH 27 March 2013 The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) is slated to pass a resolution this week that would extend MONUSCO's mandate until March 2014, and add a new "intervention brigade" authorized to engage in offensive military action against armed groups in Eastern DRC. FIDH and its member organisations in the DRC, the ASADHO, Groupe Lotus (GL) and Ligue des Électeurs (LE), express their concerns regarding the implication of such a decision on civilian populations.

"The incorporation of such an offensive military force into a UN mission would mark an unprecedented change to the traditional United Nations peacekeeping model and require stronger human rights protection's mechanisms to avoid increased harm to civilians," declared Souhayr Belhassen, President of FIDH.

The creation of an intervention brigade may certainly result in an escalation in military confrontations and increased risk of retaliatory attacks by armed groups against civilians. If the United Nations truly believes that such an intervention brigade is the best hope of reducing the threat posed by armed groups in Eastern DRC, MONUSCO's mandate must also include provisions to mitigate against the increased risks that communities will face.(...)

In order to ensure MONUSCO's capacity to protect civilians, the mission must also improve its communication with the civilian population, which has been insufficient and ineffective up until now. Our organizations call on MONUSCO to collaborate with communities at risk to gain their trust and identify their needs. Considering the very weak presence of DRC state security forces in the region, communication with communities and civil society organisations will be the only way for MONUSCO to efficiently and effectively identify threats to civilians.

Despite any protection mechanisms that may be put in place, the risk of human rights violations against the civilian population will still increase with military confrontations taking place between MONUSCO and armed groups. "Our organizations call on the UNSC to mandate MONUSCO to continue monitoring and reporting on the human rights situation in the DRC, and to support national and international efforts for the fight against impunity, including those of the International Criminal Court, to bring to justice perpetrators of serious human rights abuses and violations of international humanitarian law", said Jean-Claude Katende, President of ASADHO.

Beyond the scope of its mandate, MONUSCO's success in protecting civilians will be determined by whether the DRC government commits to Security Sector Reform (SSR) and establishing rule of law in the Eastern DRC. Even if the proposed intervention brigade is successful in disarming some of the armed aggressors, it cannot ensure the safety of civilians in these areas through indefinite military force. Long-term peace and stability can only be guaranteed through a strong state presence in these areas, including through the deployment of well-trained security forces and an effective judicial system, a goal which will not be achieved unless the government of the DRC engages seriously in reforms to its security sector and judiciary.

FIDH and its member organisations in the DRC reiterate that without genuine reforms implemented by the government of the DRC, the situation in the country will remain volatile, and

urge the UN and the international community to monitor and enforce the implementation of the commitments made by the government of the DRC, notably those outlined in the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework signed on 24 February 2013. (...)

The creation of an intervention brigade within MONUSCO and the subsequent move towards peace enforcement by the UN will not be a panacea for resolving violence and conflicts in the DRC. Cooperation with affected communities and the genuine engagement of the DRC government are essential if MONUSCO is to succeed in its objective of contributing to the long-term stabilization of the country. **See the full article [here](#).**