The 17 NGOs, below, urge the United Nations (UN) Security Council to consider the following recommendations when deciding on a new mandate for the UN Peacekeeping Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO).

1. Elections

- **Protection of civilians must remain a top priority for MONUSCO** and the Security Council should ensure that election related support does not divert scarce resources already dedicated to other protection of civilians tasks. **Any support to elections, mentioned below, should be adequately resourced with a temporary surge of additional financial resources and peacekeepers.**

- **MONUSCO should provide logistical support to ensure that independent electoral monitors can reach remote locations.**

- **The Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) in DRC should step up political engagement and use his good offices to ensure a transparent and inclusive election**, including by denouncing election irregularities and helping to ensure that voters’ rights are respected. MONUSCO should clearly articulate the standards that should be met in free and fair elections in DRC. **MONUSCO should train police to prevent electoral violence and safeguard polling places**, similar to its role in the 2006 elections.

- **MONUSCO’s civilian protection strategy should be especially responsive to the possible persecution of human rights defenders and journalists in the lead up to the elections.** MONUSCO should be ready to report publicly and denounce such abuses if they occur. MONUSCO’s Human Rights Defenders Unit should elaborate specific strategies to prevent violations of the right to assembly and expression.

- **MONUSCO should draw up contingency plans for possible threats to civilians in the period before, during and after elections, which identify possible election-related flashpoints**, mainly in big cities such as, Mbandaka, Lubumbashi, Kinshasa. Such contingency planning should be done by protection officers working with military staff and include identifying scenarios where violence might occur (delay in voting or releasing results; intimidation to deter voting; contestation of the elections) and plan preventative
deployments. Contingency planning should also include outreach to the police, FARDC, political figures and community leaders. In addition to contingency planning, MONUSCO should develop and implement, in conjunction with the DRC government, its own elections security plan.

- **MONUSCO should provide support for, and coordination of, an inter-party electoral steering committee** compromised of the electoral commission, main donors, Congolese political parties and civil society to facilitate consultation on the electoral process and resolve tensions.
- **MONUSCO should encourage community leaders to engage in local conflict mediation before and after voting to help diffuse tensions.** Use of UN radio to promote responsible campaigning will be important.
- **MONUSCO should receive additional resources in advance to play the increased role in elections envisaged above**, rather than divert resources from its current work in protecting civilians. MONUSCO resources should be increased at this time of heightened security risk.

2. Protection of Civilians

- **The Security Council should encourage member states to increase resources to successful protection mechanisms** such as the Joint Protection Teams, Community Liaison Assistants and Community Alert Networks to better respond to community protection concerns. Many of these mechanisms have proved useful but MONUSCO in some areas lacks the capacity to respond to the information provided by them and is unable to expand them further. The protection cluster protection matrix being used in the Kivus and Ituri should also be used in Haut Uele and Bas Uele to ensure a better response to protection threats by the mission in that crucial area.
- **MONUSCO should replicate best practices across the mission area**, such as foot patrols, presence in FARDC check points, and other monitoring of FARDC as appropriate.
- **Support communications in remote areas:** MONUSCO should engage with key stakeholders as well as provide support, as appropriate and in line with realistic resourcing, to the establishment of mobile phone networks and other communication networks in remote communities (especially in LRA-affected areas). This will strengthen civilian early warning systems and enable them to communicate with peacekeeping missions and national armies. Such assistance should include security and logistical support to secure and enable the expansion of mobile phone network coverage and radios. Any such efforts should ensure civilians are not put at heightened risk. Early warning systems should become part of civilian security systems.
- **Patrolling by peacekeepers** should be more responsive to the needs and concerns of communities. For example, peacekeepers should undertake more foot patrols, escorts to fields (where requested by communities) and use all-terrain vehicles, especially in LRA areas.
- **It remains crucial for MONUSCO to improve its reporting on protection of civilians issues.** Regular Secretary General reports should include clear data regarding civilians killed, raped, wounded, displaced and forcibly recruited. Those reports should also detail the actions undertaken to mitigate these threats.
3. Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA)

- More MONUSCO troops deployed to northeastern Congo, especially in Haut and Bas Uele. In the immediate term, troops should be re-deployed from other parts of the mission where the protection threats to civilians are not as great. MONUSCO should consider creative ways to free up existing troops, including working with the FARDC to undertake force protection so that peace keepers can spend a greater percentage of their resources protecting civilians and not MONUSCO assets. In the medium term, UN member states should commit additional peacekeeping troops specifically to protect civilians in the LRA-affected areas. MONUSCO should at all times analyze security risks and review its operations to ensure populations at higher risks are protected.

- The Security Council should direct MONUSCO and urge governments in the region to engage in more comprehensive coordination and information and intelligence gathering and sharing about LRA movements and communities vulnerable to attack. Coordination should be enhanced by regular interaction and information-sharing with regional governments, civil society, and religious leaders to enable MONUSCO to better develop its own protection tools in LRA areas.

4. Support to Demobilization, Disarmament, Repatriation, Resettlement and Reintegration (DDRRR)

- The MONUSCO mandate should more strongly highlight the need to better support the DDRRR of armed groups. MONUSCO support should focus on DDRRR logistics, particularly transport, including in LRA affected areas. It should also partner with local organizations wherever feasible in DDRRR initiatives.

- The Security Council should also call on all regional governments to support DDRRR initiatives, including through clarifying the legal rights of persons who choose to leave the various militia groups.

- MONUSCO should step up non-military solutions to end the conflict with the FDLR, including encouraging a political settlement between the DRC government and the FDLR and improving incentives for voluntary DDR of non-genocidaire combatants, including identifying alternatives to repatriation to Rwanda.

5. Security Sector Reform

- MONUSCO should continue implementing its conditionality policy to ensure that no Congolese army commander responsible for grave human rights abuses receives UN support or participates in joint operations with the UN. MONUSCO’s prosecution support cells and other relevant units should prioritize support for the prosecution and arrest of individuals who have been denied UN support via the conditionality policy, or who are named in international or national arrest warrants or UN sanctions lists. Such action will strengthen the efficacy of the conditionality policy.

- MONUSCO should strongly support the creation of vetting mechanisms for both current and new officers in the FARDC.
MONUSCO should support the creation of “Special Courts” to prosecute perpetrators of serious human rights violations that function in a manner that is independent and within international and Congolese law.

6. Stabilization

- MONUSCO’s stabilization efforts to date should be reviewed. While some large-scale road projects have been successful, other aspects of the stabilization program have not seen significant results.
- Stabilization projects, especially in the East, should be grounded in a detailed analysis of the local context, and should be avoided in areas where the security and political risks create an environment that is not conducive to stabilization.

7. Exploitation of Natural Resources

- MONUSCO should deploy units at perimeters around the five centres de negoce (UN-backed mineral trading centres) in order to assist with security and deter any renewed attempt by FARDC or rebels to control or otherwise profit illicitly from the minerals trade. In this manner, MONUSCO could also ensure newly demilitarized mining and trading areas remain under legitimate civilian control.
- Given the large illicit trade in conflict minerals, MONUSCO should be instructed to intensify its monitoring of shipments at key airstrips and border points that are identified by the UN Group of Experts as critical smuggling points for the traffic in illegal conflict minerals.
- As the monitoring system for the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) Certification and Tracking Scheme develops, MONUSCO should provide protection for auditors and monitors, who will likely be under security threat because of the involvement of armed groups and criminal networks in the minerals trade.

The following organizations are responsible for this statement:

1. Africa Europe Faith and Justice Network (AEFJN)
2. Bonn International Center for Conversion (BICC)
3. Common Action for Transparent and Peaceful Elections / Agir Ensemble pour les Elections Transparentes et Apaisees (AETA)
4. Deutsche Welthungerhilfe
5. Ecumenical Network Central Africa (OeNZ)
6. The Enough Project
7. Global Center for Responsibility to Protect
8. Global Witness
9. Herne One World Center / Eine Welt Zentrum Herne
10. International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH)
11. International Rescue Committee (IRC)
12. Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa
13. Oxfam
14. Refugees International
15. Resolve
16. Society for Threatened Peoples
17. Trocaire

For correspondence with the signatories of this statement please contact Crisis Action at andrew.hudson@crisisaction.org; +1 646 233 1651.