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**Annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner
for Human Rights and reports of the Office of the
High Commissioner and the Secretary-General
Technical assistance and capacity-building**

Technical assistance and capacity-building in the field of human rights in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Report of the team of international experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo*

Summary

By resolution 57/34 of 11 October 2024, the Human Rights Council renewed the mandate of the team of international experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo and requested the team to provide the necessary technical support to the Government in implementing effectively its National Transitional Justice Policy. The Council requested the team of international experts to submit its final report at its sixtieth session.

The mandate was carried out against a backdrop of continuing tensions between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda, a worsening security and humanitarian situation in the east of the country, and the withdrawal of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The team of international experts carried out three field visits, enabling it to assess remaining challenges and the options to be explored to promote the fight against impunity and transitional justice at the provincial, national and subregional levels.

Lastly, the team of international experts offered its conclusions and made recommendations with a view to strengthening current and future activities.

* Agreement was reached to publish the present report after the standard publication date owing to circumstances beyond the submitter's control.



I. Introduction

1. By resolution 57/34 of 11 October 2024, the Human Rights Council renewed the mandate of the team of international experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo and requested the team to provide the necessary technical support to the Government in implementing effectively its National Transitional Justice Policy, in particular by taking account of the cross-border nature of conflict and insecurity in the Great Lakes, identifying the causes of conflict and preventing their recurrence, and designing and implementing mechanisms for transitional justice and the fight against impunity, and encouraged it to support the Government in this regard, in particular by proposing concrete measures. This mandate was reiterated in Council resolution S-37/1 of 7 February 2025.
2. The Council requested the team of international experts to submit its final report to the Council, in the framework of an enhanced interactive dialogue, at its sixtieth session and to present it with an oral update at its fifty-eighth session.
3. In the same resolution, the Council requested the High Commissioner to continue to provide the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo with technical assistance, including the necessary forensic expertise, to support the country's judicial authorities in their investigations into allegations of serious human rights violations and abuses, including conflict-related sexual violence and grave violations of children's rights, with a view to bringing the perpetrators to justice.
4. On 11 October 2024, the High Commissioner for Human Rights renewed the mandates of Marie-Thérèse Keita-Bocoum (Côte d'Ivoire) and Bessolé René Bagoro (Burkina Faso) as, respectively, chair and member of the team of international experts.
5. In carrying out its mandate, the team of international experts was supported by a secretariat comprising a coordinator and a human rights officer specializing in transitional justice. It conducted three field visits to the Democratic Republic of the Congo.¹
6. During its visits, the team of international experts met with a number of Congolese officials,² members of the diplomatic corps,³ representatives of United Nations agencies, funds and programmes,⁴ members of the panel of facilitators of the African mediation process for peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo,⁵ established by the African Union,

¹ The first visit took place from 24 November to 4 December 2024, the second from 16 to 27 March 2025, and the third from 9 to 20 July 2025. In addition, on 16 and 17 July, the team of international experts took part, along with other relevant actors, in a workshop to assess the follow-up to the recommendations set out in Human Rights Council resolution 57/34.

² The Prime Minister, the Minister of Justice, the Minister for Communications and the Media, the Minister for Human Rights, the President of the National Human Rights Commission, the Coordinator and Deputy Coordinator of the National Oversight Mechanism for the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region, the President of the High Military Court, the Permanent Secretary of the Human Rights Liaison Body, the Deputy Director of the National Reparations Fund for Victims of Conflict-related Sexual Violence and Other Crimes against the Peace and Security of Humankind, the Executive Coordinator of the Inter-Institutional Commission for Assistance to Victims and Support for Reforms, the Coordinator of the Special Fund to Compensate Victims of Illicit Acts Carried Out by Uganda, the National Coordinator of the Disarmament, Demobilization, Community Recovery and Stabilization Programme, and the National Focal Point of the International Criminal Court and special adviser to the Head of State.

³ The Ambassadors of France, Angola, Burundi and the United States of America, the Justice and Human Rights Officers of the European Union delegation, and the Political Adviser of the Belgian Embassy.

⁴ The Special Representative and Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region, the Director and Deputy Director of the United Nations Joint Human Rights Office in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Acting Representative of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), representatives of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, and the Representative of the United Nations Development Programme.

⁵ Sahle-Work Zewde, former President of Ethiopia, and Catherine Samba-Panza, former President of the Central African Republic.

international non-governmental organizations,⁶ the Kasai-Central Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission and civil society. The team of international experts was briefed on the progress made in the fight against impunity and the implementation of transitional justice, and it provided technical support to the authorities in these areas.

7. On 1 April 2025, the team of international experts presented its oral report during the interactive dialogue held as part of the Council's fifty-eighth session.

8. The present report is submitted by the team of international experts, in accordance with Council resolution 57/34, adopted on 11 October 2024. It highlights the various activities undertaken by the team of international experts in fulfilment of its expanded mandate.

II. Mandate

9. The team of international experts carried out its mandate against a backdrop of worsening armed conflict in the east of the country,⁷ with the expansion of the Mouvement du 23 mars (M23) and the Rwanda Defence Force into the North and South Kivu Provinces, which has had humanitarian and security-related consequences that are ongoing at the time of writing. However, a number of important peace initiatives give cause for hope. On 19 July 2025, the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and a delegation representing the coalition of Alliance Fleuve Congo (AFC) and M23 signed a declaration of principles in Doha. On 27 June 2025, the Governments of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and of Rwanda signed a peace agreement in Washington, D.C., under the auspices of the United States of America.

10. The team of international experts completed its mandate in October 2024 when the Democratic Republic of the Congo was elected to the Human Rights Council for the period 2025–2027. The Democratic Republic of the Congo supported 235 of the 284 recommendations made during the fourth cycle of the universal periodic review.⁸ These are opportunities for the country to strengthen its commitment to human rights.

11. The mandate was carried out in parallel with the withdrawal of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO). The financial situation of the United Nations has had a negative impact on the mandate of the team of international experts, forcing it to forego several field visits to the country and the subregion and several other activities relating to its mandate.

12. Nevertheless, the team of international experts conducted three visits to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and provided significant support to the Government. The team of international experts would like to thank in particular the United Nations Joint Human Rights Office in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and MONUSCO for their support.

III. Cooperation between the team of international experts and the authorities of the Democratic Republic of the Congo

13. The team of international experts thanks the authorities of the Democratic Republic of the Congo for their fruitful cooperation, which facilitated its work.

14. The team of international experts particularly appreciated its exchanges with the highest authorities of the State, which enabled it to provide support in relation to the crisis in the east of the country, to comment on various aspects concerning its mandate and to obtain

⁶ Avocats sans frontières, Impunity Watch, TRIAL International, Solidarité féminine pour la paix et le développement intégral (SOFEPADI) and Coalition nationale des groupes de victimes en République démocratique du Congo.

⁷ <https://news.un.org/fr/story/2025/01/1152571>.

⁸ See A/HRC/58/6/Add.1.

strategic information for the implementation of its new mandate in order to formulate relevant recommendations to stakeholders.

IV. Current security and humanitarian situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

15. The team of international experts remains deeply concerned about the deteriorating security situation in the east of the country following the offensive led by M23 and RDF in the North Kivu and South Kivu Provinces. It deplores the victims of this offensive among the civilian population, the Congolese army, MONUSCO peacekeepers and soldiers of the Southern African Development Community Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

16. The team of international experts laments the consequences of this escalation of violence, notably the escape of major war criminals, the destruction of courts, a rise in crime and an increase in cases of kidnapping and vigilante justice. In addition, threats have been made against members of the judiciary, human rights defenders, journalists, traditional leaders, and victims and witnesses involved in trials for serious crimes.⁹

17. The team of international experts is concerned about the worsening humanitarian crisis, which is causing major displacements of the population inside and outside the country. It notes the serious violations of international humanitarian law and the forced displacement of thousands of people, the difficulties in providing basic social services and the obstacles to the delivery of humanitarian aid in areas affected by the security crisis. It deplores the threats against health workers and the kidnappings to which they are subjected, as well as the attacks on medical facilities, looting of medicine supplies and destruction of medical equipment in the affected provinces. All of this severely restricts the population's access to primary healthcare and results in reduced support from humanitarian organizations.

18. The team of international experts deplores the persistence of inter-community conflicts in the provinces not affected by armed conflict. For instance, Mai-Ndombe Province is marked by inter-community conflict, with numerous victims among the Teke and Yaka communities, and by clashes between soldiers of the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and "Mobondo" groups. In Tshopo province, an ongoing intercommunity conflict between the Mbole and Lengola communities has led to massive population displacement.

19. The team of international experts is concerned about the increase in cases of sexual violence, including in the context of community conflicts. It notes that women and girls, particularly those who have been displaced, have been raped, and in many cases gang-raped, by members of M23, the Allied Democratic Forces and the Cooperative for the Development of the Congo (CODECO), in North Kivu and Ituri Provinces. The dire humanitarian situation, particularly in the east of the country, has considerably increased the risk that displaced women and girls will experience insecurity, sexual exploitation and child marriage.

20. The team of international experts remains concerned about the security situation in Ituri Province, where the Allied Democratic Forces continue to commit atrocities. Ituri remains the epicentre of the conflict between CODECO and the armed group Front populaire d'autodéfense en Ituri (FPAC), affecting the Lendu and Hema communities.

21. The team of international experts is also concerned about the creation of the armed group, Convention pour la révolution populaire, by Thomas Lubanga, who has already been convicted by the International Criminal Court.¹⁰

⁹ See the press release of the team of international experts following the crisis in the east of the country, 31 January 2025, <https://monusco.unmissions.org/fr/cpl%E2%80%99equipe-d%E2%80%99experts-internationaux-s%E2%80%99inqui%C3%A8te-de-la-d%C3%A9t%C3%A9rioration-de-la-situation-s%C3%A9curitaire-en>.

¹⁰ In March 2025, Lubanga announced the creation of the Convention pour la révolution populaire or Convention révolutionnaire populaire (CRP). This movement is based in Ituri, not far from the Ugandan border, and has a military wing.

V. Implementation of the mandate of the team of international experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo

22. The mandate of the team of international experts is to provide the Government with the technical support necessary to combat impunity and implement a transitional justice process focused on the needs of victims, while taking into account the subregional impact of the crises in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

A. Fight against impunity

23. With regard to the fight against impunity, the team of international experts continued to observe the administration of justice, including in emblematic legal cases, particularly those opened in connection with the crisis linked to the Kamuina Nsapu militia.

1. Administration of justice

24. The team of international experts notes with satisfaction the Government's efforts to improve the administration of justice but is concerned about the impact of the crisis in the east of the country on the fight against impunity and the protection of victims, witnesses and judicial actors.

25. The team of international experts notes that the occupation of Goma and Bukavu has led to the destruction of the main judicial and penitentiary facilities¹¹ and to the disappearance of almost all case files, including those concerning serious crimes, including conflict-related sexual violence.

26. The team of international experts notes that, against this challenging backdrop, MONUSCO and the United Nations Joint Human Rights Office, with the support of international partners in Bukavu, have assisted the Government in digitizing the case files of 10 persons convicted of international crimes and 10 alleged perpetrators of such crimes.

27. The team of international experts is concerned about the wave of insecurity which, following the mass escape of prisoners from the central prisons of Goma, Bukavu, Uvira, Kabare and Kalemie between January and March 2025, has hit the justice sector in the east of the country, resulting in numerous deaths, sexual violence and the flight of almost 200 war criminals.

28. The team of international experts remains concerned about the security situation in prisons and the living and working conditions of prison staff. It reiterates its recommendation that prison facilities should be made more secure and that prison staff should be better trained and remunerated.

29. Recent events in the east of the country have worsened the insecurity faced by judicial actors and led to an increase in impunity, seriously undermining the rule of law. The United Nations Joint Human Rights Office has received many requests for protection from judicial actors, victims, witnesses and human rights defenders who have been threatened with reprisals by former prisoners implicated in serious crimes or by members of armed groups. The establishment, by AFC/M23, of a conflict arbitration court¹² replacing the State authorities constitutes a serious infringement of the State's sovereignty.

¹¹ In North Kivu Province, the courthouse in Goma was pillaged and ransacked and remains out of operation. Munzenze Central Prison was set on fire, causing the death of 141 women prisoners and 28 young children. All the remaining prisoners escaped, including those charged with or convicted of war crimes or crimes against humanity. However, it should be noted that a few days before the coalition entered Goma, the prison authorities had transferred to Kinshasa certain prisoners who were dangerous or had been involved in serious crimes. In South Kivu Province, Bukavu Court of Appeal was pillaged, its archives were destroyed and the offices of members of the judiciary were ransacked. Several district courts, in Uvira, Kalehe and Fizi, have ceased to operate on account of the continued insecurity.

¹² <https://kivumorningpost.com/2025/05/30/goma-lafc-m23-ouvre-un-tribunal-darbitrage-pour-les-dossiers-judiciaires-en-suspens/>.

30. The team of international experts invites the Government to improve protection measures for members of the judiciary and other persons affected by the crisis and invites the Security Council to strengthen the mandate of MONUSCO in order to increase its capacity to support the Government in its efforts to secure national territory and restore the rule of law.

31. The team of international experts is concerned about the increase in the number of women and children being trafficked, including for the purposes of forced labour and sexual exploitation, due to the security situation in the east of the country. It calls on the Government to step up the fight against trafficking in women and children and to provide comprehensive support for victims.

32. The team of international experts notes that a national conference on justice on the theme “Why is the Congolese justice system in such a poor state?” was held from 6 to 16 November 2024. The event was attended by over 3,500 representatives of the justice sector, political, administrative and traditional authorities, the student population and international partners.

33. The team of international experts encourages the Government to take into account the work and discussions arising from the national conference on justice when drawing up the new national justice reform policy for the period 2026–2035 and to adopt a holistic approach to transitional justice based on the needs of victims in order to ensure complementarity between the national justice reform policy and the national transitional justice policy.

34. The team of international experts commends the Government on the two bills, the draft decree and the draft order presented at the forty-fourth meeting of the Council of Ministers on 23 May 2025¹³ in the context of the implementation of transitional justice, in particular the bill amending and supplementing the Organic Act on the organization, functioning and powers of the ordinary courts and the bill on the fundamental principles of transitional justice.

35. The team of international experts is pleased to note that its recommendation concerning greater involvement of the civil courts in dealing with international crimes has been taken into consideration, with the possibility of adding military judges to the composition of the Court of Cassation and the courts of appeal and the proposed creation of special units to investigate crimes against the peace and security of humanity. The team of international experts strongly encourages the Government to adopt these two bills in order to be able to implement these measures.

36. The team of international experts notes the appointment on 1 April 2025, by presidential order, of 2,500 members of the national legal service, the second cohort to be appointed from among the 5,000 persons recruited in November 2022. It encourages the Supreme Council of Justice to begin their initial training, with the support of international partners.

37. The team of international experts deplores the consequences of the mass escape in September 2024 of nearly 1,300 inmates, including dangerous criminals, from Kinshasa Penitentiary and Re-education Centre (Makala Prison), which resulted in the deaths of 131 inmates, including 3 women, and during which hundreds of people were injured and at least 269 women were raped.

38. The team of international experts calls on the Government to take protective measures with a view to establishing the facts, identifying those responsible, providing reparation to victims and strengthening the technical and operational capacities of prison staff.

39. The team of international experts appreciates the rehabilitation efforts that have been made, including the renovation of Kinshasa Penitentiary and Re-education Centre, and the launch of projects to improve prison food and to facilitate the reintegration of prisoners. Work is also under way to improve the conditions of detention in Luzumu Prison in Kongo Central Province.

¹³ <https://communication.gouv.cd/actualites/conseil-des-ministres>.

40. The team of international experts is concerned about the impact of the mpox epidemic, particularly in prison environments on account of the crowded living conditions. It encourages the Government to continue its rehabilitation efforts and to take measures to relieve prison overcrowding in order to improve conditions of detention.

2. Handling of emblematic legal cases

41. The team of international experts remains concerned about the lack of progress in the cases concerning the crisis linked to the Kamuina Nsapu militia. It notes, however, that the case of the murder of the two United Nations experts, Zaida Catalán and Michael Sharp, remains under appeal before the High Military Court in Kinshasa, while the case of the murder of the four Congolese persons who were accompanying them has been at a standstill since 2017.

42. Only 2 out of 22 emblematic cases have reached the trial stage, namely, the case of the murder of the two United Nations experts and the Mulombodi case.

43. The team of international experts is concerned about the suspension, as of late May 2024, following the death of one of the two defendants, of the first trial based on command responsibility in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, involving a general of the Congolese National Police and a general of the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

44. The team of international experts deplores the lack of progress in the Bana Mura case, which has been referred to the High Military Court with jurisdiction over two of the defendants, namely, a deputy chief superintendent of the Congolese National Police and a senator and former vice-governor of Kasai.

45. The team of international experts invites the judicial authorities to take the necessary steps to complete these legal proceedings in order to establish the truth, assign responsibility for the offences committed in Kasai and realize the victims' right to justice and reparation.

46. The team of international experts encourages the Government to continue, with the support of its partners, building the capacity of professionals in the criminal justice system to investigate and prosecute international crimes, in order to speed up and strengthen the judicial response.

47. The team of international experts has taken note of the conviction, in Ituri Province, of Jean Deus Django Dyogo, a political and administrative authority of the State at the time of the events and a member of the *Coopérative pour le développement du Congo* armed group, and in South Kivu Province, of Donat Kwenga Omari, a former warlord, including, in the latter case, the award of substantial compensation to the 399 victims who had sued for damages in the proceedings.

48. The team of international experts also takes note of the conviction of 425 people, since October 2024, for crimes involving violations of human rights and international humanitarian law: 149 officers of the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, 21 officers of the Congolese National Police, 25 members of armed groups and 230 civilians.

49. The team of international experts commends the Government and its partners on the efforts made to update provincial strategies for prioritizing the prosecution of serious crimes, within the framework of the United Nations joint programme to support justice reform in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. This work, which was carried out recently in the Provinces of Ituri, North Kivu, South Kivu, Kasai and Kasai Central, has brought the number of priority case files to 88.

50. The team of international experts encourages the Government to adopt a national strategy on the prioritization of prosecutions that would ensure consistency and harmonization at the highest level and strengthen judicial independence.

51. The team of international experts appreciates the significant contribution of the technical assistance team deployed to the United Nations Joint Human Rights Office to support the judicial authorities in the fight against impunity through the sharing of expertise in forensic medicine and forensic psychology.

52. The team of international experts welcomes the forensic examinations carried out in the village of Diboko, in Kasai Province, where the United Nations Joint Human Rights Office forensic team, at the request of the military courts, documented the remains of 115 victims who had been discovered in secret mass graves.

53. The team of international experts also welcomes the forensic anthropological examination of the remains of 29 police officers who had disappeared in Malenga, which has provided crucial insight into the crisis linked to the Kamuina Nsapu militia and has allowed their families and communities to move through the mourning process and the judicial authorities to initiate proceedings.

54. The team of international experts welcomes the official handover of a full postgraduate and residency programme in forensic medicine to the Minister of Higher and University Education on 14 May 2025. This handover of programmes supported by the United Nations Joint Human Rights Office forensic team is in line with one of the recommendations made in its previous report.

55. The team of international experts notes that, in June 2025, the forensic team helped the Lubumbashi judicial authorities to assess the injuries of seven victims who had been exposed to toxic substances released by an ore processing plant and to carry out an accountability analysis.

56. The team of international experts invites international partners to support the Government's efforts in this area with a view to strengthening the fight against impunity and ensuring better access to justice for victims.

3. Situation of victims

57. The team of international experts notes that the crisis in the east of the country has led to the collapse of protection mechanisms and has disrupted the provision of psychological support and care.

58. The team of international experts has been informed that, given the scale of the crisis in the east of the country, a partnership agreement has been signed between the United Nations system and the National Reparations Fund for Victims of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence and Other Crimes against the Peace and Security of Humanity in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, with a view to ensuring that victims of violence linked to the armed conflict in the Provinces of North Kivu and South Kivu have access to justice and urgent provisional reparation.

59. The team of international experts notes with satisfaction that Act No. 22/065 of 26 December 2022, on the fundamental principles of protection and redress for victims of conflict-related sexual violence and victims of crimes against the peace and security of humanity, has enabled some 1,500 victims to benefit from the abolition of registration and legal fees.

60. The team of international experts is pleased that the United Nations Joint Human Rights Office has supported 836 victims of international crimes. It urges the Government to systematize the provision of legal, judicial and psycholegal support to victims of serious crimes.

61. The team of international experts welcomes the steps taken to build the capacities of seven national actors to conduct psychological assessments tailored to mass crimes and to draft expert reports with a focus on the trans- and intergenerational dimensions of the physical, emotional, psychological and social repercussions of the acts committed.

62. The team of international experts encourages the actors concerned to promote the transfer of skills and the development of national psychological expertise in order to provide the country with the human resources needed to carry out psychological assessments of victims and witnesses during legal proceedings. The team of international experts invites the Government to broaden the legal basis on which assessments of this kind may be ordered by the judicial authorities.

B. Implementation of the transitional justice process

63. The team of international experts notes some interesting advances in transitional justice at the provincial and national levels, as well as encouraging initiatives at the regional level.

1. Monitoring of the implementation of the transitional justice process in Kasai Central Province

64. The team of international experts welcomes the continuous support that has been provided to the provincial Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission since the launch of the operational phase of its activities. It welcomes the development and approval of documents and tools relating to the truth-seeking process in preparation for the phase that will involve taking statements from victims and witnesses.

65. The team of international experts recalls that this phase is crucial to establishing the truth and requires the implementation of a protection strategy to ensure the security of victims, witnesses, Commission buildings and personnel, and data.

66. The team of international experts appreciates the support provided to the provincial Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission through collaboration with the European Union, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and TRIAL International. It also welcomes the support provided by the Peacebuilding Fund for the project to promote transitional justice for peacebuilding in the Kasai and Kasai Central Provinces. It strongly encourages other partners to support the Commission.

67. The team of international experts welcomes the strategic consultations between the National Reparations Fund for Victims of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence and Other Crimes against the Peace and Security of Humanity in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the provincial Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission, facilitated by the United Nations Joint Human Rights Office, which have enabled the two organizations to discuss their respective mandates and to identify opportunities for collaboration in the implementation of two important pillars of transitional justice, namely truth-seeking and reparation for the victims of the crisis linked to the Kamuina Nsapu militia in Kasai Central Province. The team of international experts welcomes this initiative, which is in line with one of its recommendations, and calls for this collaboration to be formalized.

68. The team of international experts notes that there has been a lack of communication concerning the activities of the provincial Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission. It deplores the insufficient funding of the Commission by the provincial and national authorities.

69. The team of international experts reiterates its recommendation to the government of Kasai Central Province to give concrete expression to its support for the provincial Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission and invites the Ministry of Human Rights to include the Commission in its budget.

2. Monitoring of the implementation of the transitional justice process at the national level

70. The team of international experts welcomes the Head of State's ongoing commitment to transitional justice and the progress made by the Government at the national level.

71. The team of international experts particularly commends the Government on the adoption by the Council of Ministers of a set of legal texts, including the draft national transitional justice policy.¹⁴ This policy sets out a new, context-specific approach that takes

¹⁴ The texts in question, which were introduced at the forty-fourth meeting of the Council of Ministers on 23 May 2025, are as follows: the bill amending and supplementing Organic Act No. 13/011-B of 11 April 2013 on the organization, functioning and powers of the ordinary courts; the bill on the fundamental principles of transitional justice; the draft decree on the implementation of Act

into account the conflict and post-conflict situations that coexist in the country and advocates a decentralized approach to transitional justice.

72. The team of international experts encourages the Parliament to adopt these legal texts and the Government to facilitate their implementation, taking into account the concerns of victims in line with international standards.

73. The team of international experts notes that the approval of the strategy for implementing the right to reparation, at the round table held by the National Reparations Fund for Victims of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence and Other Crimes against the Peace and Security of Humanity in the Democratic Republic of the Congo from 1 to 3 July 2025, constitutes a significant development.

74. The team of international experts notes that the persons in charge of the Disarmament, Demobilization, Community Recovery and Stabilization Programme do not wish to include former combatants in the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process without prior vetting and wish to ensure that human rights are taken into account in the process.

75. The team of international experts welcomes the action taken, with the participation of the United Nations Joint Human Rights Office, in response to the recommendation in which it called for closer collaboration between the Disarmament, Demobilization, Community Recovery and Stabilization Programme and other national mechanisms.

76. The team of international experts welcomes the rapprochement between the United Nations Joint Human Rights Office and the Special Fund to Compensate Victims of Illicit Acts Carried Out by Uganda and recommends that priority should be given to collective reparation in Tshopo Province and that this collaboration should be strengthened in the fields of communication, data security, forensic medicine, site security and victim protection.

77. The team of international experts welcomes the adoption of the national transitional justice policy and particularly appreciates the appointment, by the Ministry of Human Rights, of a coordinator and two deputies to lead its implementation.

78. The team of international experts notes the organization of two workshops on transitional justice, involving national and international actors, by the Inter-Institutional Commission for Assistance to Victims and Support for Reforms. These workshops were an opportunity to review the activities carried out, gather recommendations from the actors concerned and establish a permanent consultation framework.

79. The team of international experts encourages all initiatives to promote the coordination of the State bodies involved in the transitional justice process and welcomes the holding, on 9 June 2025, of the first round table organized jointly by the United Nations Joint Human Rights Office and the Ministry of Human Rights, with the participation of technical and financial partners and civil society, with a view to setting up a framework for consultations between relevant actors in the field of transitional justice.

80. The team of international experts welcomes the enthusiasm and willingness of civil society to become more involved in the transitional justice process. The team notes the concern of civil society that it is not sufficiently involved and invites the Government to increase its involvement.

81. The team of international experts notes that the Government wishes to set up a steering committee for the establishment of a special criminal court in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

82. The team of international experts deplores the slow progress made in setting up the human rights liaison body. It recalls the importance of this body for promoting and ensuring

No. 22/065 of 26 December 2022 on the fundamental principles of protection and redress for victims of conflict-related sexual violence and victims of crimes against the peace and security of humanity; and the draft ministerial order setting out the procedures for maintaining the single consolidated list of victims of conflict-related sexual violence and victims of crimes against the peace and security of humanity.

respect for human rights in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and invites the Government to work towards ensuring that it is fully operational.

83. The team of international experts is concerned about the disappearance of certain sites where mass crimes have been committed, throughout the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and points out that truth-seeking mechanisms will be severely impacted by the disappearance of evidence and that the protection of these sites is essential for memorialization.

84. The team of international experts welcomes the efforts of the United Nations Joint Human Rights Office to promote a human rights economy, realize the right to development and protect human rights in relation to the extractive industries. It notes with satisfaction the organization by the United Nations Joint Human Rights Office of training sessions on these topics for relevant actors and welcomes the holding of the twentieth Mining Week by the Government.¹⁵ It calls on the Government and international partners to continue their efforts to support this sector.

3. Design and implementation of transitional justice at the regional level

85. The team of international experts welcomes the progress made through regional political processes.

86. The team of international experts welcomes the appointment of Faure Gnassingbé, President of the Council of Togo, as Mediator of the African Union. He will be supported by a panel of facilitators¹⁶ in his efforts to resolve the ongoing conflict in the east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

87. The team of international experts welcomes the peace agreement between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda that was signed on 27 June 2025 in Washington, D.C., under the auspices of the United States of America.

88. The team of international experts is pleased that this agreement builds on the progress made through the Nairobi and Luanda processes and the mediation in Doha and hopes that it will constitute a step towards peace, stability and sustainable development in the Great Lakes Region.

89. The team of international experts regrets, however, that this agreement makes no reference to accountability or transitional justice, including the rights to truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-repetition, and that the other processes do not take these matters into account either.

90. The team of international experts calls for transitional justice to be incorporated into peace negotiations, with emphasis on the participation of civil society and women's organizations. It remains convinced that a regional approach to transitional justice is all the more essential as the causes and consequences of regional crises are cross-cutting rather than exclusive to each State.

91. The team of international experts encourages the Governments of the subregion to promote the creation of mechanisms for intergenerational and community dialogue, with the support of the United Nations. The team also calls on them to build the capacities of civil society in the subregion to enable it to make a meaningful contribution to the various peace processes.

92. The team of international experts remains convinced that dialogue is the path to achieving peaceful coexistence, peace and stability in the subregion. It advocates for adopting

¹⁵ Sessions for the provincial authorities, the security and defence forces, the National Human Rights Commission and civil society in Haut-Katanga and Lualaba Provinces, as well as a special session for staff and managers of Tenke Fungurume Mining in Fungurume, Lualaba Province, on the right to development, the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, corporate social responsibility, social auditing and the Sustainable Development Goals.

¹⁶ The panel of facilitators of the African mediation process for peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is composed of the following persons: Olusegun Obasanjo, former President of Nigeria; Uhuru Kenyatta, former President of Kenya; Mokgweetsi Masisi, former President of Botswana; Catherine Samba-Panza, former President of the Central African Republic; and Sahle-Work Zewde, former President of Ethiopia.

principles of cohabitation based on international law, respect for human rights and the strengthening of the rule of law in the Great Lakes Region.

4. Challenges in the implementation of the transitional justice process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

93. The team of international experts notes five major challenges in the implementation of the transitional justice process despite the progress made: (a) inclusive implementation of the transitional justice policy, taking into account national consultations; (b) inadequate coordination and harmonization of national transitional justice mechanisms; (c) the lack of effective communication and the need to foster ownership of the process at the provincial and national levels; (d) the financing of the process; and (e) the difficulty of implementing transitional justice in the midst of a deepening crisis.

(a) Inclusive implementation of the transitional justice policy, taking into account national consultations

94. The team of international experts regrets that the Government was unable to complete national consultations in all provinces prior to the adoption of the national transitional justice policy and encourages it to continue these consultations in accordance with the established road map and with the support of its technical and financial partners.

95. The team of international experts notes that the process of implementing a national transitional justice policy must be inclusive and participatory if it is to be successful. The team invites the Government to facilitate the participation of civil society and the main beneficiaries, including victims.

(b) Inadequate coordination and harmonization of national transitional justice mechanisms

96. The team of international experts notes that the various national bodies working in the field of transitional justice were created to meet specific needs but operate in accordance with a comprehensive approach based on the four pillars of transitional justice.

97. The team of international experts believes that the various strategies in the areas of reparation, truth-seeking, justice and guarantees of non-repetition pursued by the relevant mechanisms should be aligned with national policy to ensure that there is a shared vision and resources are used efficiently.

98. The team of international experts reaffirms that coordinating and harmonizing the work of the national transitional justice mechanisms around a shared vision supported by the draft national transitional justice policy will facilitate the implementation of the process and ensure its effectiveness.

99. The team of international experts notes with satisfaction that a mechanism for the technical coordination and evaluation of the implementation of the various pillars of transitional justice is provided for in the bill on the fundamental principles of transitional justice in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. This mechanism, which would be under the authority of the President, should allow for greater synergy between the various transitional justice initiatives.

100. The team of international experts notes that the bill on the fundamental principles of transitional justice in the Democratic Republic of the Congo¹⁷ provides for the establishment of a new national truth and reconciliation commission, which would be responsible for truth-seeking and the promotion of reconciliation, peaceful cohabitation and a culture of peace, and whose operating procedures would be set out in a decree. The commission's mandate would have both a national and a provincial component. The team of international experts invites the Government to find ways of ensuring cooperation between the national mechanism and the provincial mechanisms.

¹⁷ See article 10 of the bill on the fundamental principles of transitional justice in the Democratic Republic of the Congo: "A national truth, justice, peace and reconciliation commission shall be established."

(c) *The lack of effective communication and the need to foster ownership of the process at the provincial and national levels*

101. The team of international experts continues to deplore the inadequate communication about the transitional justice process at the provincial and national levels.

102. The team of international experts points out that the lack of communication about the provincial and national transitional justice process has a direct impact on the ownership of the process by the populations who are supposed to benefit directly from it, and invites the Government to disseminate the national transitional justice policy to enable those populations to take ownership of it.

103. The team of international experts reaffirms the need for greater involvement of civil society, including organizations that defend the rights of vulnerable groups, especially women, children and Indigenous Peoples, to make the process more inclusive and to meet people's aspirations.

(d) *The financing of the process*

104. The team of international experts appreciates the Government's considerable efforts to financially support the National Reparations Fund for Victims of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence and Other Crimes against the Peace and Security of Humanity in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. However, it would like this support to be extended to all transitional justice initiatives currently under way, including the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission of Kasai Central Province. Financial support of this kind would promote national ownership of the transitional justice process and encourage bilateral and multilateral partners to step up their participation.

105. The team of international experts notes the low level of mobilization of international partners for the financing of the transitional justice process. It deplores the fact that the worsening financial situation of the United Nations has considerably affected the support provided by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), including the deployment of additional technical experts, and urges the Office to keep in place those already deployed.

106. The team of international experts calls on the Government, OHCHR and international partners to better coordinate and strengthen their financial support for the transitional justice process and to explore other types of financial partnership.

(e) *The difficulty of implementing transitional justice in the midst of a deepening crisis*

107. The team of international experts recognizes the difficulty of implementing a transitional justice policy while some of the country's provinces are occupied or affected by conflict.

108. The team of international experts notes with concern the persistence of regional tensions, particularly in the east of the country. It recalls that responding to security and humanitarian challenges through a military approach alone cannot bring about lasting peace or meet the needs expressed by the populations affected.

109. The team of international experts notes that the Government needs to strengthen dialogue with all parties involved in the crisis in the east of the country, including neighbouring countries, and calls for commitments to be honoured and for all existing subregional cooperation initiatives to be taken into consideration.

110. The team of international experts reaffirms the need to incorporate a human rights-based approach into these processes within the context of transitional justice in order to achieve lasting peace.

111. The team of international experts reiterates that it is important for the Government to speed up the implementation of the Disarmament, Demobilization, Community Recovery and Stabilization Programme, in accordance with international standards, and to take into account the regional dimension.

112. The team of international experts underscores the importance of strengthening regional judicial cooperation to intensify the fight against impunity for cross-border offences, including offences involving the illegal exploitation of natural resources. It welcomes the efforts of MONUSCO, OHCHR and the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region to build the capacities of the Great Lakes Judicial Cooperation Network.

113. The team of international experts remains concerned about the ongoing withdrawal of MONUSCO at a time when several provinces in the east of the country are facing situations of armed conflict and intercommunity strife. The team of international experts calls on the Government and the Security Council to consider the major challenges in terms of access, security and human rights protection that this withdrawal might cause if it is not offset by the deployment of sufficient troops belonging to the armed forces and the national security forces who have receiving training on the rules of international human rights law and international humanitarian law and who abide by those rules.

VI. Conclusions and recommendations

A. Conclusions

114. **The team of international experts is grateful to the Congolese authorities for engaging in positive and fruitful cooperation throughout its mandate. It commends them on their collaborative approach and their efforts to implement transitional justice and combat impunity.**

115. **The team of international experts is also grateful to the entire United Nations system, including MONUSCO and the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region, and the diplomatic community for their continued support and appreciates the receptiveness of civil society and national and international non-governmental organizations working to combat impunity and promote transitional justice. It is also grateful to the panel of facilitators of the African mediation process for peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo for giving it the opportunity to discuss its mandate and the possibility of incorporating transitional justice into subregional peace initiatives.**

116. **The team of international experts welcomes the progress made on the legislative and regulatory fronts and the adoption of the national transitional justice policy and hopes that this policy will meet the expectations of the Congolese people in terms of justice, reconciliation and lasting peace. It also appreciates the efforts made to coordinate, harmonize and finance national transitional justice mechanisms.**

117. **The team of international experts remains deeply concerned about the impact of the crisis in the east of the country on the fight against impunity and is worried about the lack of progress in legal cases, particularly the emblematic cases opened in connection with the crisis linked to the Kamuina Nsapu militia in Kasai Central Province. It fears that these delays within the judicial system, combined with the challenges faced by the provincial Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission, will have an impact on progress towards reconciliation and lasting peace in the province.**

118. **The team of international experts welcomes all the initiatives undertaken since the signing of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region in Addis Ababa on 24 February 2013 with a view to resolving conflicts and achieving lasting peace, particularly in the east of the country. It notes, moreover, that the escalation of the crisis in the east of the country proves that peace in this part of the country remains very fragile and that solutions can be found only through the genuine shared commitment of actors in the subregion. In this context, it stresses the need to develop a regional approach to transitional justice, starting by explicitly incorporating this theme into the regional peace processes of Addis Ababa, Luanda, Nairobi, Doha and Washington, D.C.**

119. The team of international experts draws the attention of the Congolese authorities to the need to strengthen the judicial response to serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law, with a focus on building the technical and operational capacities of judicial actors and developing national expertise in forensic medicine and the provision of psychological support.

120. The team of international experts calls on the Government once again to step up its coordination and its support, including financial support, for the national transitional justice process, taking into account the history, circumstances and needs of the affected populations, in order to ensure the coherence, participatory nature and effectiveness of the process and thus promote peace, reconciliation and development.

121. The team of international experts calls for synergy between technical and financial partners. In view of the immense challenges facing the country, it also calls for an increase in the resources allocated to the United Nations Joint Human Rights Office to enable it to effectively support the fight against impunity and the transitional justice process that is under way and it stands ready to support the authorities in their search for ways to achieve lasting peace.

B. Recommendations

122. The team of international experts recalls that it is necessary to continue implementing the recommendations made in its previous reports. It reiterates some of its recommendations and makes some new ones.

1. Prevention of impunity

123. In view of the current impact of the crisis in the east of the country on the fight against impunity, the team of international experts urges the Government to take measures to preserve case files and to secure judicial and penitentiary facilities, including by digitizing files and ensuring the protection of victims, witnesses, human rights defenders and all those working in the criminal justice system. It invites international partners to support the Government in taking these measures.

124. The team of international experts recommends that the Human Rights Council build the capacities of the technical assistance team by maintaining and increasing its human and financial resources in order to avoid undermining efforts to combat impunity. It recommends that the Government establish forensic medicine programmes at Congolese universities.

125. The team of international experts reiterates its call for the Government and the Supreme Council of Justice to continue their efforts to provide adequate initial and in-service training for members of the national legal service.

126. The team of international experts encourages the Government to continue building the capacity of all those working in the criminal justice system to investigate and prosecute international crimes, and to increase the involvement of the civil courts. It invites all international partners to support these efforts with a view to improving criminal investigations, strengthening the fight against impunity and ensuring better access to justice for victims.

127. The team of international experts invites the judicial authorities to take all the necessary steps to complete the relevant legal proceedings in order to establish the truth, assign responsibility for the offences committed in Kasai and realize the victims' right to justice and reparation.

128. The team of international experts encourages the Government to give further thought to setting up a special court or mixed chambers, taking into account the subregional dimension of the crisis, and to continue engaging in regional judicial cooperation.

129. The team of international experts remains concerned about the lifting of the moratorium on the death penalty and calls on the Government to reconsider its decision.

2. Vision and coordination of transitional justice initiatives

130. The team of international experts invites the United Nations Joint Human Rights Office to help the authorities, international partners and stakeholders to organize themselves in order to better coordinate and finance the implementation of the transitional justice strategy and to enable the population to take ownership of the strategy.

131. The team of international experts encourages the Government to coordinate the various strategies relating to reparation, truth-seeking, justice and guarantees of non-repetition around a shared vision in order to promote the implementation of the national transitional justice policy and the efficient use of resources.

132. The team of international experts calls on the national and international actors involved in the transitional justice process to act in synergy and coordinate their resources and recommends that the National Reparations Fund for Victims of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence and Other Crimes against the Peace and Security of Humanity in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the provincial Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission formalize their collaboration with a view to better aligning their approaches and ensuring the complementarity of their actions in Kasai Central Province.

133. The team of international experts encourages international partners supporting the transitional justice process to strengthen the coordination and complementarity of their actions at the national and provincial levels and to implement the consultation framework established at the round table of 9 June 2025.

134. The team of international experts invites the Government to redouble its efforts to ensure that the human rights liaison body is fully operational.

3. Consideration of victims at all stages of the process

135. The team of international experts encourages the Parliament to adopt the legal instruments on transitional justice presented at the forty-fourth meeting of the Council of Ministers on 23 May 2025.

136. It encourages the Government to facilitate the implementation of these instruments and to ensure the effective and secure participation of victims, civil society and religious and traditional authorities in the transitional justice process, including during national consultations. It also encourages the Government to ensure data security.

137. The team of international experts reiterates its call for the judicial authorities to systematically request medical and psychological assessments of victims of international crimes involved in legal proceedings, including by broadening the legal basis for requesting such assessments.

138. The team of international experts encourages the relevant actors to promote the transfer of skills and the development of national psychological expertise in order to provide the country with the human resources needed to carry out psychological assessments of and provide psychotherapy to victims and witnesses.

4. Conflict prevention and guarantees of non-repetition

139. The team of international experts encourages the Disarmament, Demobilization, Community Recovery and Stabilization Programme to continue developing synergies between the Programme and ongoing transitional justice initiatives, specifically by prioritizing the development of screening mechanisms and adopting a consistent demobilization strategy, including in the implementation of the agreement signed in Washington, D.C.

140. The team of international experts calls on the Government and international partners to continue their efforts to support the promotion of a human rights economy, the realization of the right to development and the protection of human rights in relation to the extractive industries.

5. Public, private and international funding of the transitional justice process

141. The team of international experts once again urges the Government and the provincial government of Kasai Central to provide the provincial Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission with adequate financial, material and human resources to enable it to fully discharge its mandate.

142. The team of international experts calls on the Government, OHCHR and international partners to better coordinate and strengthen their financial support for the national transitional justice process and to explore other types of financial partnership.

6. Subregional dimension of the transitional justice process

143. The team of international experts calls for transitional justice to be incorporated into peace negotiations and underscores the importance of the participation of civil society and women's organizations.

144. The team of international experts notes that the Government needs to strengthen dialogue with all parties involved in the crisis in the east of the country, including neighbouring countries, and calls for commitments to be honoured and for all existing subregional cooperation initiatives to be taken into consideration.

145. The team of international experts encourages the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region and OHCHR to step up their cooperation in order to further support the Great Lakes Judicial Cooperation Network.
