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Technical assistance and capacity-building

Written statement* submitted by Maat for Peace, Development and Human Rights Association, a non- governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

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* Issued as received, in the language(s) of submission only.

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Human Rights situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo

Introduction

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) faces many challenges during the transitional phase followed the last elections. There are a number of urgent challenges that need to be addressed and are among the most important files that must be put to an end. Maat for Peace, Development and Human Rights (Egypt) would like to highlight in particular the need to address the risks of armed groups, as well as that of Ebola.

Armed groups the biggest challenge to the new Government

During the first half of this year, armed groups carried out at least 418 summary executions.¹ Several provinces in eastern DRC - notably North Kivu, South Kivu, Ituri and Tanganyika - have been plagued by recent intercommunal violence and attacks by armed groups. According to the Kivu, at least 80 armed groups actively operate in the eastern DRC. UNHCR reported that fighting in North Kivu led to the displacement of more than 100,000 people during April. There were reports of rape and sexual violence as well as of children being forcibly recruited into armed groups.²

In May 2019, violent attacks were carried out in Ituri city in eastern DRC by well-armed assailants in the Territories of Djugu and of Mahagi. Such attacks led to the loss of human lives, especially among women and children, looting of property of the peasants and burning their houses. On Monday, 10 July 2019, killings were recorded in Djugu between the villages KOBU and NIZI, leading to the deaths of many innocent people as well as those of some other peaceful citizens between Tsé and Largu and the city of Mongwalu and its surroundings. The area of Banyali Kilo and the chiefdom of Bahema Nord were not spared. To this day, these villages and other agglomerations are still witnessing atrocities.³

Incidents of sexual violence by armed groups against children are still widespread in all conflict zones, 933 cases, but they remain poorly reported due to stigmatization or fear of reprisals. These figures have been verified in the DRC since 2018. 2,253 children were separated from armed groups in the same year.⁴

Rampant diseases... Ebola is sounding the alarm

DRC is prone to large public health emergencies, including Ebola outbreaks since the 1970s, a large yellow fever outbreak last year and ongoing cholera epidemics.⁵

Despite the government's efforts to address these diseases, it faces several challenges, including the lack of funding to deal with these epidemics and lack of infrastructure, as well as the challenges it faces to fight armed groups. Since the beginning of 2019, there have been at least 174 attacks against healthcare facilities and workers. A total of five responders have perished and 51 have been injured in the North Kivu region, which is the epicenter of the

¹ “—(Almost 700 summary executions in Congo in six months, says U.N.”, VOA, July 25, 2019, available at: <https://bit.ly/2Ykkwxk>

² R2P Monitor, “Populations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo continue to face mass atrocity crimes committed by various armed groups.”, 15 July 2019, available at: <https://bit.ly/2M18GXp>

³ PGA, “The Crimes and Violence Committed in Ituri Province Will Not Go Unpunished”, PGA, available at: <https://bit.ly/31tnwtB>

⁴ أنباء الأمم المتحدة، "تقرير أممي يشير إلى أن عام 2018 شهد أعلى مستويات مسجلة لأعداد الأطفال القتلى أو الجرحى في الصراعات المسلحة"، منشور على موقع أنباء الأمم المتحدة، بتاريخ 30 يولييه 2019، وللمزيد من التفاصيل على الرابط التالي: <https://bit.ly/2M1DN4W>

⁵ Department for International Development, “Find out how the UK will respond to opportunities and challenges”, GOV.UK, available at: <https://bit.ly/2YnYILD>

epidemic. The lack of security constrains access to vaccines and treatment, in turn driving the increase in transmission and fatalities.⁶

There were 285 new confirmed cases of Ebola during the 12 June – 2 July period, marking a trend of decreasing cases since the height of the epidemic in mid-April. A total of 2,369 cases have so far been recorded, with 2,275 confirmed cases resulting in 1,598 deaths, since the outbreak began in August of last year.⁷

Declines in the incidence of new cases have been most apparent in hotspots such as Katwa, Mandima and Beni. However, substantive rates of transmission continue within affected communities, and further waves of the outbreak may be expected. An increase in the incidence of new cases has been reported from Mabalako Health Zone in recent weeks, and high infection rates continue within Butembo metropolitan.⁸ The biggest challenge is funding to address the disease. There is a funding gap of more than \$ 60 million to address the disease in the RDC.⁹

Recommendations

Maat for Peace, Development and Human Rights recommends to:

- Work to stop the hate speech inciting violence, of the armed and ethnic groups in the country, and pursue ways of dialogue and democracy among all groups.
- Provide intensive humanitarian assistance to the victims, displaced persons and refugees, especially women and children.
- Intensify security assistance and to coordinate with MONUC on Congolese territory.
- Intensify efforts to mobilize funding to address Ebola, particularly in the eastern DRC.
- Increase security of Ebola treatment centers from attacks by armed groups, as the spread of the disease is linked to armed violence in the country.

⁶ Catherine Saez, “New Plan For Ebola Outbreak Response To Ensure Safety Of Respondents”, Health Policy Watch, 28/05/2019, available at: <https://bit.ly/2YUpEJw>

⁷ Maina Waruru, “Community & Health Sector Cooperation Contains Ebola Threat In Uganda; Epidemic Simmers On In DRC”, Health Policy Watch, 08/07/2019, available at: <https://bit.ly/2KhHYaV>

⁸ “, — (Ebola virus disease – Democratic Republic of the Congo”, WHO, 6 June 2019, available at: <https://bit.ly/2KtdnGp>

⁹ Maina Waruru, op.cit.