

The President of the Security Council presents her compliments to the members of the Council and has the honour to transmit herewith, for their information, a copy of a **letter dated 13 June 2022 from the Coordinator of the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of Congo extended pursuant to Security Council resolution 2641 (2022)** addressed to the President of the Security Council, and its enclosures.

This letter and its enclosures will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/2023/431.

13 June 2023



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13 June 2023

Excellency,

The members of the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo, whose mandate was extended pursuant to Security Council resolution 2641 (2022), have the honour to transmit herewith, in accordance with paragraph 9 of that resolution, the final report on their work.

The report was provided to the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1533 (2004) concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo on 1 May 2023 and was considered by the Committee on 19 May 2023.

The Group would appreciate it if the present letter and the report were brought to the attention of the members of the Security Council and issued as a document of the Council.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of our highest consideration.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'T. De Groof'.

Mélanie De Groof  
Coordinator  
Group of Experts on the DRC  
extended pursuant to Security  
Council resolution 2641 (2022)

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Joseph Behal'.

Joseph Behal

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Fiona Mangan'.

Fiona Mangan

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Maia Trujillo'.

Maia Trujillo

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Krisztina Varga'.

Krisztina Varga

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'David Zounmenou'.

David Zounmenou

Her Excellency  
Mrs. Lana Zaki Nusseibeh  
President of the Security Council  
New York

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## Final report of the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo

### *Summary*

During the reporting period, episodes of intense violence affected the three provinces of the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, and intercommunal conflict in Mai-Ndombe Province escalated. The political situation remained tense in the run-up to general elections scheduled for December 2023. The Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo noted with concern that dynamics related to the electoral process, combined with the ongoing heightened conflict in the east and strained regional relations, posed a threat to the country's peace and stability.

The security and humanitarian situation in Ituri, North Kivu and South Kivu Provinces continued to deteriorate significantly, despite the deployment of multiple uniformed actors – namely the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo, FARDC), peacekeepers of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the East African Community Regional Force, the Uganda People's Defence Forces and private military companies – and the state of siege in North Kivu and Ituri that has now been in place for two years.

In North Kivu, Operation Shuja had an impact on the sanctioned armed group Allied Democratic Forces (ADF). Nonetheless, ADF pursued expansion beyond North Kivu and Ituri Provinces and continued to conduct deadly attacks on civilians. The use by ADF of improvised explosive devices reached a new peak with a deadly detonation during a religious service, for which Da'esh claimed responsibility. The Group documented financial support from Da'esh to ADF and links between ADF and Da'esh cells in South Africa.

Despite bilateral, regional and international efforts to de-escalate the crisis related to the Mouvement du 23 mars (M23), the sanctioned armed group continued to significantly expand its territory and increase its attacks. The armed group's expansion engendered a catastrophic humanitarian crisis, causing the displacement of more than 1 million civilians in North Kivu Province. Announced withdrawals and disengagements appeared to have been temporary and tactical, aimed mainly at buying time amid mounting international pressure. M23 also launched attempts to win allies in South Kivu, in particular the armed group Twirwaneho, with the objective of opening a front in South Kivu.

The variety of M23 military equipment, some produced recently, provided insight into the significant firepower of the armed group and attested to violations of the arms embargo.

The Group of Experts obtained further evidence of direct interventions by the Rwanda Defence Force (RDF) on Democratic Republic of the Congo territory, either to reinforce M23 combatants or to conduct military operations against the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR) and local armed groups. The Group identified several RDF commanders and officials coordinating RDF operations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

A new pattern of targeted attacks by M23 on civilians emerged, with several deadly operations targeting populations associated with, or presumed to support, FDLR and other armed groups. Incidents of rape, including gang rape by M23 combatants, were prevalent.

Local armed groups and FDLR created the “Congolese Patriotic Resistants” network, which fought M23 alongside FARDC. Collaboration was coordinated by senior FARDC officers, who supported the armed groups with logistics, military equipment and financing.

The hostilities triggered by the territorial expansion of M23 continued, stoking xenophobia and hate speech and accentuating ethnic rifts between the warring sides. Hateful and belligerent rhetoric, intended to vilify Rwandophone populations perceived to support M23, continued to be propagated by political figures, civil society actors, local populists, activists and members of the Congolese diaspora, and were widely amplified on social media. Exclusionary discourse, including the rejection of citizenship rights for Rwandophone citizens, re-emerged, significantly with regard to voter registration in the electoral context.

In Ituri, the security situation deteriorated significantly, with recurrent attacks between the armed group Zaïre and the Coopérative pour le développement du Congo/ Union des révolutionnaires pour la défense du peuple congolais (CODECO/URDPC) and the creation of the Mouvement d’autodéfense populaire de l’Ituri. Meanwhile, internal rifts within the Front patriotique et intégrationniste du Congo (FPIC) (also known as Chini ya Kilima,) resulted in the emergence of a new leader who claimed to adhere to the Disarmament, Demobilization, Community Recovery and Stabilization Programme of the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Nonetheless, FPIC combatants remained armed and mobilized.

Violence escalated throughout the province, also extending into Mahagi and Irumu territories. Reprisal attacks on civilians by CODECO/URDPC and Zaïre reflected growing tensions between the Lendu and Hema communities. CODECO/URDPC was by far the most belligerent group, conducting systematic, brutal, large-scale and well-coordinated attacks on villages, killing mainly civilians.

In South Kivu, while the joint operations of the Burundi National Defence Force (Force de défense nationale du Burundi) and FARDC continued to have an impact on the dynamics of armed groups, the crisis related to M23 also had repercussions with intertwined effects, including the creation of new alliances. Some armed groups sent combatants to North Kivu or remobilized to prevent M23 from entering South Kivu, while other combatants and leaders liaised with M23. Cycles of retaliatory clashes between armed groups and attacks on civilians continued, in particular in the Hauts Plateaux of Mwenga, Uvira and Fizi territories.

Regional recruitment, including of Banyamulenge youth in the wider region, boosted M23 and Twirwaneho numbers. The Group of Experts documented the mass recruitment, training and use of children in hostilities by Twirwaneho.

Twirwaneho continued to finance itself through a local taxation scheme and funding from the Banyamulenge diaspora living in the region and in the United States of America. Some humanitarian relief funds sent by the Mahoro Peace Association, a Banyamulenge community association based in the United States, were used to finance Twirwaneho.

Regarding natural resources, Primera Gold DRC, a partnership between the United Arab Emirates and the Democratic Republic of the Congo aimed at combating gold smuggling, was launched in January 2023. In the space of three months, Primera Gold DRC has exported 10 times the amount of gold that was exported officially by the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in 2022. Primera Gold DRC put in place compliance mechanisms to meet national, regional and international requirements for responsible sourcing. However, the Group of Experts documented a number of challenges, including the risk of Primera

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Gold DRC becoming a channel for laundering illegal gold.

A criminal network involving Burundian economic actors and officials organized gold smuggling from the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The six transactions investigated by the Group of Experts yielded at least \$455,000 to members of the criminal network.

Tin, tantalum and tungsten supply chains from the mining town of Rubaya, North Kivu, have become compromised by the presence of armed groups and the suspension of all traceability activities. This also threatened tin, tantalum and tungsten supply chains in South Kivu Province, where the proceeds from minerals produced in Rubaya were laundered.

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### Annexes\*

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\*The annexes are being circulated in the language of submission only and without formal editing.

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## I. Introduction

1. The mandate of the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo was extended on 30 June 2022 by the Security Council in its resolution [2641 \(2022\)](#). Five members of the Group of Experts were appointed by the Secretary-General on 24 August 2022 (see [S/2022/641](#)). Owing to a lack of consensus in the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution [1533 \(2004\)](#) concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo on two proposed natural resources/finance experts, the sixth expert (the second natural resources/finance expert) was not appointed until 21 February 2023 (see [S/2023/132](#)).

2. The final report of the Group of Experts is submitted pursuant to paragraph 9 of resolution [2641 \(2022\)](#). The Group exchanged information with the panels of experts on the Central African Republic, Haiti, Libya, Somalia and South Sudan.

### **Cooperation with the Group of Experts**

3. The Group of Experts expresses its gratitude for the support provided by the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) during the reporting period.

### **Compliance with the requests of the Group of Experts for information**

4. The Group of Experts met with government officials, private sector actors and organizations of several countries. The Group addressed a total of 52 official communications to 27 Member States, international organizations and private entities. The Group notes that it informs the country of registration/location when sending information requests to private entities and individuals. At the time of drafting the present report, the Group had received 20 responses.

5. The Group of Experts regrets the untimeliness and the low overall number of responses to its official requests for information from private sector actors and Member States and underlines that responses to such requests are essential to its investigations.

### **Methodology**

6. The Group of Experts used the evidentiary standards recommended by the Informal Working Group of the Security Council on General Issues of Sanctions ([S/2006/997](#)). It based its findings on documents and, wherever possible, on first-hand, on-site observations by the experts themselves.

7. Given the nature of the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, few documents provide definitive proof of arms transfers, recruitment, command responsibility for grave human rights abuses and the illegal exploitation of natural resources. The Group of Experts has therefore relied on eyewitness testimony from members of local communities, former combatants and current members of armed groups. The Group has also considered expert testimony by government officials and military officers of countries in the Great Lakes region and other countries, as well as United Nations sources. The Group corroborated information by using at least three independent and reliable sources.

8. The present report covers investigations conducted up to 15 April 2023. Owing to word count limitations, the Group of Experts has detailed some of its findings and evidence in the annexes.

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## II. Mai-Ndombe

9. The Group of Experts continued to follow with concern an escalation in intercommunal conflict, primarily between members of the Teke and Yaka communities in Kwamouth territory, Mai-Ndombe Province. The origins of the conflict lie in changes to the taxation system, in May 2022, wherein the Teke sought to impose higher agricultural taxes on “non-native” communities, having local Congolese National Police and the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo, FARDC) use force to extract payment in some instances. The situation deteriorated over the months that followed, drawing in other “non-native” communities alongside the Yaka, with organized groups of armed civilians forming to attack villages, targeting primarily local chiefs and notables and damaging infrastructure and the local economy. Inflammatory speech stirred pre-existing ethnic tensions and reignited generations-old disputes over customary power and land rights.<sup>1</sup>

10. The violence has resulted in mass internal displacement of the civilian population, from the Mongata-Masia-Mbia axis towards Kinshasa; however, it is challenging to determine precise numbers owing to the absorption of these internally displaced persons into the vast metropolis of Kinshasa.<sup>2</sup> Access to voter registration for displaced populations is likely to have been affected. The Group of Experts will investigate the instability in Mai-Ndombe Province.

## III. North Kivu

### A. Allied Democratic Forces

#### Operational developments

#### Operation Shuja of the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Uganda People’s Defence Forces

11. Operation Shuja – a joint operation of FARDC and the Uganda People’s Defence Forces ([S/2022/967](#), paras. 7, 16–18) – was still ongoing at the time of writing in Beni territory, North Kivu, and in southern Ituri. Multiple sources, including Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) ex-combatants and former ADF abductees, reported an increase in the pace of the operations since the end of 2022, in particular in Beni territory.<sup>3</sup> This had an impact on ADF, which lost several commanders, including Boaz, who was killed in combat in Ituri (see [S/2022/479](#), annex 7). ADF also had to constantly move its camps, sometimes on a daily basis, to avoid being targeted by those operations.

12. While the joint military operations led to a relative lull in ADF activities towards the end of 2022, the armed group remained resilient, demonstrating its capability to continue conducting deadly attacks, including an attack in Uganda, on 12 December 2022, a bombing in Kasindi (see paras. 22–28 below) and frequent attacks on civilians, including in Mukondi (see paras. 18–21 below).

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) and humanitarian, non-governmental organization (NGO) and diplomatic sources.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) ex-combatants, ADF collaborators, former abductees, Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo, FARDC) sources, researchers and civil society, diplomatic and MONUSCO sources.



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### **Allied Democratic Forces expansion**

13. Multiple sources reported that ADF sent combatants and collaborators on scouting missions as it attempted to further expand its area of operations beyond North Kivu and Ituri Provinces.<sup>4</sup> ADF sought to recruit and conduct attacks in Kinshasa and in Tshopo, Haut-Uélé and South Kivu Provinces (see annex 1 and [S/2022/967](#), annex 13).

14. ADF increased its activity in South Kivu, where the armed group had long-standing networks, as has previously been documented ([S/2018/1133](#), paras. 13–15<sup>5</sup> and [S/2021/560](#), annex 6).<sup>6</sup> ADF continued recruiting in several mosques in Uvira and Kalemie.<sup>7</sup> Since late 2021, it has also held several meetings with representatives of Da'esh and/or Ahl al-Sunna wal-Jama'a in Mozambique, in South Kivu, to discuss operational strategy and tactics.<sup>8</sup> One such encounter occurred in Shabunda territory, in June 2022, following a similar meeting in Kigoma, Tanzania, in August 2021.<sup>9</sup> Sources reported that, in early 2023, Ibn Omar and Sheikh Abu Yassir Hassan, the military and spiritual leaders of Ahl al-Sunna wal-Jama'a in Mozambique, respectively (see para. 39 below), travelled to South Kivu, where they met with senior members of the leadership of ADF.<sup>10</sup>

15. In addition, ADF contacted the Mai-Mai Malaika based around Salamabila, Maniema Province (see annex 2 and [S/2020/482](#), paras. 45–51).

### **Internal dynamics of the Allied Democratic Forces**

16. In January 2023, the majority of combatants of the smaller ADF splinter group led by Benjamin Kisokeranio, Hassan Nyanzi alias Isaac (Jamil Mukulu's son) and Muzaya ([S/2021/560](#), para. 15), rejoined ADF or surrendered to FARDC, after the arrest of Kisokeranio, in January 2022 ([S/2022/479](#), para. 43), and recent Shuja operations in their area around Mwalika weakened the group.<sup>11</sup>

17. Internal tensions within the leadership of ADF were reported. In 2022, Amigo, one of the main leaders of ADF operating in Mwalika (see [S/2021/560](#), annex 4), was sidelined by Seka Baluku, who sent a trusted commander, Seka Umaru, to oversee Amigo's activities and assume command of his camp.<sup>12</sup> The leadership of ADF had concerns regarding Amigo's closeness to some FARDC members and his management of funds.

### **Attacks on civilians**

18. ADF continued perpetrating large-scale, deadly attacks on civilians. Despite the concentration of Shuja operations in the Boga and Tchabi areas, ADF attacked civilians in those areas, conducting faster operations in smaller groups and, to avoid retaliation, killing victims, mostly with machetes ([S/2022/967](#), paras. 13–15). As it

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<sup>4</sup> ADF ex-combatants, ADF collaborators, FARDC sources, researchers and civil society, diplomatic and MONUSCO sources.

<sup>5</sup> One of the main ADF collaborators identified by the Group of Experts, Senga Khaled, who was arrested in 2018 by Democratic Republic of the Congo authorities ([S/2018/1133](#), para. 13), was recently released and reportedly back in South Kivu, collaborating with ADF.

<sup>6</sup> ADF ex-combatants, ADF collaborators, FARDC sources, researchers, intelligence sources and civil society, diplomatic and MONUSCO sources.

<sup>7</sup> ADF ex-combatant, FARDC sources, researchers and diplomatic and MONUSCO sources.

<sup>8</sup> Researchers and diplomatic sources.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Researchers and civil society sources. Abu Yassir had reportedly already travelled to Beni territory, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in 2017.

<sup>11</sup> ADF ex-combatants, ADF collaborator, FARDC sources and researchers.

<sup>12</sup> ADF ex-combatants and abductees, ADF collaborator, FARDC sources and researchers.

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moved westward, it increased attacks along the Luna-Komanda and Luna-Mambasa roads, west of the RN4 road.<sup>13</sup>

19. In March 2023, ADF intensified attacks in southern and south-eastern Beni territory, killing more than 80 civilians in a single week and abducting more than 20 others, including in Mukondi, on 8 March, when at least 38 were killed, including 11 children, the youngest only two months old. At least 17 civilians were injured, including several children, and at least 30 houses were burned down.<sup>14</sup>

20. ADF continued attacking civilians as at the time of drafting the present report, targeting villages, killing and kidnapping civilians and looting their households, including in retaliation for offensive operations against the armed group. On 8 April 2023, at least 21 civilians were killed in an attack in Musandaba, on the outskirts of Beni.<sup>15</sup> As in other similar attacks, the perpetrators used machetes. By mid-April 2023, ADF had killed nearly 100 civilians in less than a month.<sup>16</sup>

21. Da'esh claimed responsibility for several of those attacks, including the attacks carried out on 8 March and 8 April 2023 (see annex 3).

### **Improvised explosive devices and Allied Democratic Forces networks**

22. The increased use of improvised explosive devices by ADF in urban settings, as has reported been previously by the Group of Experts ([S/2022/479](#), paras. 48–52, and [S/2022/967](#), paras. 20–26), reached a new peak on 15 January 2023 when a device detonated during an outdoor baptism service of the Lubiriha Pentecostal Church in Kasindi, a small town on the Ugandan border in the Rwenzori sector, Beni territory (see annex 4).

23. The large explosive charge and the positioning of the bomb in a crowded place demonstrated that the attack was intended to inflict the maximum number of casualties on churchgoers. The explosion killed 16 civilians and wounded at least 62, representing the highest number of victims of an ADF bomb in a single incident. Many victims were dismembered by the explosion, as witnessed by the Group of Experts at Beni hospital and documented by national authorities and MONUSCO at the morgue.

24. Clear conclusions on the design and trigger mechanism of the improvised explosive device could not be reached owing to contamination of the scene prior to its inspection by the MONUSCO improvised explosive device team. Still, traces of explosives, namely urea nitrate-based home-made explosives, were recovered, as were metal pieces intended to increase the lethal radius and cause severe injuries.<sup>17</sup> The use of nitrate was confirmed by an ADF collaborator, Moise Mbusa Mupalalo (see annex 5), who was arrested in February 2023 and acknowledged having purchased nitrate at a pharmacy in Butembo, at the end of 2022, and sending it to ADF commander Abwakasi, who built the bomb.<sup>18</sup> The pharmacist, who was first contacted by Abwakasi (see also paras. 34, 36 and 37 below and [S/2022/967](#), para. 23), confirmed the purchase by Mupalalo. The improvised explosive device team and the national authorities estimated the explosive charge to be between 7 and 10 kg, which is greater than that of any other improvised explosive device that has

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<sup>13</sup> MONUSCO sources, researchers and FARDC sources.

<sup>14</sup> MONUSCO sources, researchers, FARDC sources, witnesses and local authorities.

<sup>15</sup> FARDC, MONUSCO sources, researchers and civil society sources.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> MONUSCO document on file with the Group of Experts.

<sup>18</sup> He was also arrested while he was collecting more nitrate, which he confirmed was intended for the building of new improvised explosive devices.

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exploded or been recovered in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to date, thereby demonstrating that ADF now has better access to explosive materials.

25. Injuries sustained by one of the deceased victims initially raised the prospect of a suicide bomb (i.e. a person-borne improvised explosive device); this was initially also suggested by ADF internally.<sup>19</sup> Further analysis showed that the improvised explosive device was deposited prior to the explosion and that no person-borne device was used in the attack (see also [S/2022/479](#), paras. 48–52 and 57). Mathe Nzanu Magnifique ([S/2022/967](#), annex 10), who was arrested in March 2023, acknowledged that he had been sent to Kasindi by Amigo from 12 to 18 January 2023, precisely during the time of the explosion. Whereas he initially acknowledged having laid the bomb, he later retracted his statement.

26. Only a few hours after the explosion, Da'esh claimed responsibility for the attack in at least two communications (see annex 6). In one such claim, it also announced future operations, warning that it would “let the Congolese forces and their allies know that their successive campaigns against the mujahidin will only lead to more failure and loss, God willing”. In addition, the Group of Experts obtained an authenticated audio clip sent by an ADF combatant to an ADF collaborator, in which it was stated that: “If you received the news from Kasindi, we did it to avenge our children that the Kafirs killed and then they burned their bodies. That is why we are in a state of anger, because it is a commandment from Allah. This is the retribution of the Kafirs.”

27. On 25 January 2023, another improvised explosive device exploded in a crowded market in the Ma Campagne subdistrict of Beni town, after an ADF collaborator close to Abwakasi deposited a bag containing the improvised explosive device on the ground. At least 18 civilians, including 10 children, were injured. This improvised explosive device contained a smaller amount of explosives than the device used in Kasindi; it was estimated by the improvised explosive device team to be between 500 and 750 g. Fragments of a cell phone were recovered at the blast site, indicating that the explosion was probably activated via radio-controlled device or that a timer was used (see also [S/2022/479](#), paras. 53 and 54).

28. According to Mupalalo, who had received the bomb prior to turning it over to the ADF collaborator, Abwakasi had also built this bomb, as well as another one that he had instructed be deposited in a church in Oicha. Mupalalo explained that Abwakasi had requested that the bombs inflict the maximum number of casualties.

### **Links with Da'esh and regional networks**

#### **Financial flows from the Da'esh in Somalia to Allied Democratic Forces**

29. On the basis of significant documentary evidence and testimony, the Group of Experts was able to establish that Da'esh had provided financial support to ADF, since at least 2019, through a complex financial scheme involving individuals in several countries on the continent, emanating from Somalia and going through South Africa, Kenya and Uganda.<sup>20</sup> Evidence indicates that several channels were being used by Da'esh. The Group outlined how one such mechanism had been used to transfer funds from operatives of Da'esh in Somalia (also known as IS-Somalia) to ADF collaborators (see annex 7).

30. Multiple sources noted that at the centre of the financial scheme was Suhayl Salim Mohammed Abdelrahman<sup>21</sup> (alias Bilal al-Sudani)<sup>22</sup> a Da'esh in Somalia

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<sup>19</sup> ADF collaborator, security forces and Telegram messages.

<sup>20</sup> The Group of Experts regrets that it did not receive responses to its repeated requests for information on this matter from the countries listed in the paragraph.

<sup>21</sup> Researchers and intelligence sources.

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commander under the command of Yusuf Abulqadir Mumin, the group's founder and the emir of Al-Karrar (S/2022/479, para. 46). Under Al-Sudani's direction, Somali national Abdirizak Mohamed Abdi Jimale (S/2022/479, para. 39) started working in the finance department of Da'esh in Somalia after joining the group in 2016.<sup>23</sup>

31. Between 2019 and 2020, Jimale transferred over \$400,000 to two Da'esh operatives based in Johannesburg, South Africa – Maisa Cissa (aliases Missa Issa and Maise Isse), a Ugandan national; and Sheikh Abdi Oromay, an Ethiopian national – using a hawala system, through the Heeryo Trading Enterprise, a company registered in Somalia and South Africa by Bashir Abdi Hassan (see annex 8), a Somali national also based in Johannesburg. Abdi Hassan was then instructed by Cissa and Oromay to retransfer part of the funds to Abdiweli Dubat Dege, a Kenyan national living in Nairobi. Dege subsequently transferred the funds to individuals in Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania and Mozambique.<sup>24</sup> Abdi Hassan and Dege used hawala and money transfer services, such as Mama Money and Selpal, which became a backdoor for Da'esh and other criminal networks to facilitate huge money flows throughout the region (see annex 9).<sup>25</sup>

32. The Group of Experts identified that at least \$60,000 of the \$400,000 originally transferred from Da'esh in Somalia by Jimale was received by known ADF collaborators in Uganda affiliated with ADF commander Meddie Nkalubo, who instructed them on how to use the funds. These included Aisha Katushabe and Sanyu Nakitende, Nkalubo's ex-wife, who received \$10,000 and \$30,000, respectively, in September 2020 (see also S/2022/479, annexes 25 and 26). They remitted the funds to two further ADF collaborators, including Hamidah Nabagala, who has been accused of having funded the Kampala bombings in October 2021.<sup>26</sup> While the Group could not definitively confirm that those funds were used to finance the Kampala bombings, it could confirm that this channel constitutes a direct link between ADF and Da'esh in Somalia, including financial flows to support ADF activities.

33. Aisha Katushabe and Sanyu Nakitende were arrested in Uganda, in October 2021, notably for their involvement in financing the bombings.<sup>27</sup> Jimale, meanwhile, was tried and sentenced, in August 2021, by a court in Somalia for having links with Da'esh, including with Bilal al-Sudani, and for financing terror, including through the Heeryo Trading Enterprise.

#### **Links with Da'esh cells in South Africa**

34. The Group of Experts identified Da'esh individuals and cells based in South Africa linked to ADF. Some of those individuals helped to establish links between Da'esh and ADF as early as 2017 (S/2022/479, para. 43), including through Abwakasi, who joined ADF in 2017 from South Africa (see S/2021/560, annex 4).

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<sup>22</sup> Sanctioned by the Department of State of the United States of America and killed in Somalia, in early 2023, in a drone strike carried out by the United States.

<sup>23</sup> Researchers, regional authorities and intelligence sources.

<sup>24</sup> Researchers, regional authorities and source with knowledge of the matter.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Researchers and regional authorities.

<sup>27</sup> Researchers, diplomatic sources and regional authorities. See also: [www.upf.go.ug/second-incident-of-deadly-bomb-explosion-was-a-suicide-attack/](http://www.upf.go.ug/second-incident-of-deadly-bomb-explosion-was-a-suicide-attack/).

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*Abdella Hussein Abadigga, Farhad Hoomer and others*

35. For the first time, the Group of Experts obtained documentary evidence of clear organizational links between ADF and Da'esh operatives in South Africa.

36. These operatives included Abdella Hussein Abadigga and Farhad Hoomer (see annex 10), both sanctioned by the United States of America, in March 2022, for their links with Bilal al-Sudani and Da'esh,<sup>28</sup> and in contact with Patrick Modise (see annex 11), who worked in the Da'esh immigration and logistics committee in the Syrian Arab Republic from 2014 to 2017.<sup>29</sup> Abadigga was also reportedly in the Syrian Arab Republic, in 2014, to join Da'esh, following which he led a Da'esh cell in Johannesburg.<sup>30</sup> All these operatives were in contact with one another and with Abwakasi. In particular, Modise helped to establish the initial contacts between ADF and Da'esh in 2017.<sup>31</sup> He informed Musa Baluku that his pledge of allegiance had been accepted by Da'esh in October 2017.

37. Also in October 2017, Abadigga travelled with three other individuals from South Africa to Goma, where they were arrested by the Congolese authorities while trying to join ADF (see annex 12).<sup>32</sup> At the time of his arrest, Abadigga was carrying at least two drones and a camera intended for ADF (see annex 13). Abwakasi tried to obtain their release, including through Farhad Hoomer, who travelled to the Democratic Republic of the Congo in early 2018. Upon his return to Johannesburg, in 2020, Abadigga reportedly continued to lead a Da'esh cell. He was arrested in South Africa, in late 2022, on the basis of his alleged involvement in a terror threat. His current whereabouts are unknown.

*Swalleh Abubakar*

38. Meddie Nkalubo, one of the key ADF commanders managing collaboration with Da'esh at the regional level (see [S/2021/560](#), annex 4), relied upon significant contributions from the ADF collaborator and recruiter, Swalleh Abubakar (see annex 14). Swalleh, who has moved funds and recruits for ADF through South Africa, Uganda, Zambia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo since at least 2017,<sup>33</sup> was linked to the ADF-affiliated Usafi mosque in Kampala. He lived in Uganda until at least mid-2018 or 2019, and then moved to South Africa where, at Meddie's instruction, he joined a Da'esh cell linked to Meddie and was involved in robberies and kidnappings for ransom.<sup>34</sup> Swalleh also travelled back to the region, including to the border between Tanzania and Uganda and to Zambia,<sup>35</sup> moving money and recruits for ADF until at least mid-2021. In April 2021, he remitted \$30,000 to Meddie's ex-wife, Sanyou Nakitende, in Lusaka.<sup>36</sup>

**Links with Ahl al-Sunna wal-Jama'a in Mozambique**

39. For the first time, the Group of Experts obtained evidence of organizational links between ADF and Ahl al-Sunna wal-Jama'a in Mozambique (see annex 15).

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<sup>28</sup> See <https://home.treasury.gov/policy-issues/financial-sanctions/recent-actions/20220301>.

<sup>29</sup> Researcher, intelligence sources, regional authorities and diplomatic sources.

<sup>30</sup> Researcher, regional authorities and diplomatic sources.

<sup>31</sup> Researchers and diplomatic sources.

<sup>32</sup> FARDC, intelligence sources, researchers and diplomatic sources.

<sup>33</sup> ADF ex-combatants and researcher.

<sup>34</sup> ADF ex-combatant, regional authorities and researcher.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Regional authorities and researchers.

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## B. Crisis related to the Mouvement du 23 mars

### Territorial expansion

40. Despite bilateral, regional and international efforts to de-escalate the situation since the midterm report of the Group of Experts (see annex 16), the frequency of attacks by the Mouvement du 23 mars (M23) against the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo, FARDC, the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR) and related armed groups continued to trend upward.<sup>37</sup> As a result, there has been a catastrophic deterioration of the humanitarian crisis, including the displacement of over 1 million civilians (see annex 17 and paras. 63–70 below). Clashes between M23 and FARDC, with both accusing each other of violating successive ceasefire agreements (see annex 18), resulted in significant losses on both sides. M23, which is well organized and equipped (paras. 52 and 53 below), continued to sustain intense fighting on several fronts simultaneously and often for prolonged periods of time (see also [S/2022/967](#), paras. 30 and 32).

41. M23 continued to expand the area under its control, pushing further north-east, south and west, often with the support of the Rwanda Defence Force (RDF),<sup>38</sup> despite a vigorous FARDC counteroffensive supported by local armed groups, FDLR and private military companies (paras. 47 and 48 below). M23 took control of additional strategic roads, bridges and towns, including Nyamilima, in early January 2023; Kitshanga in late January; Mushaki, at the end of February; and, briefly, the Rubaya mining area, on 26 February (see paras. 91–97 below). M23 nearly achieved the complete encirclement of Goma town.

42. In late February 2023, M23 controlled an area twice the size of the territory it had controlled in early November 2022 (see annex 19 and [S/2022/967](#), para. 31). Until mid-March 2023, M23 continued to threaten Sake, only 25 km north-west of Goma on the Mweso-Kitshanga-Goma road, including with mortar fire.<sup>39</sup> In mid-March, M23 clashed with FARDC and armed groups in the south and south-west of Sake and took control of hills overlooking the road between Sake and Minova, in South Kivu, along Lake Kivu. M23 failed to sever this final remaining axis to Goma, take control of the lake or move into Kalehe territory, South Kivu; nonetheless, the clashes resulted in massive population displacements of civilians to South Kivu and further isolated Goma. Besides restrictions on the movements of MONUSCO and humanitarian agencies, M23 control of key transport roads, including those leading to Rwanda and Uganda, also had a direct economic impact on Goma, as food and other supplies were disrupted and prices increased.

43. M23 also continued to operate and develop its parallel administration and to tax civilians and economic actors in territories under its control (see also [S/2022/967](#), annex 23).

### Incomplete withdrawal

44. Despite ceremonial withdrawals from certain positions and areas, evidence shows that the announced withdrawals and disengagements by M23 appeared to have been merely tactical, aimed at buying time in the face of mounting international pressure, while the armed group was given assurances that the “disengaged” areas would not be handed over to FARDC but to the East African

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<sup>37</sup> Some periods were also characterized by a momentary lull in fighting.

<sup>38</sup> Documents and photographic evidence on file with the Group and interviews with over 80 sources.

<sup>39</sup> The mission of the Group of Experts to Sake, February and March 2023.

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Community Regional Force, as envisaged at the mini summit held in Luanda (see annex 20).

45. Despite a symbolic handover by M23 to the East African Community Regional Force of Kibumba and Rumangabo towns on 23 December 2022 and 5 January 2023, respectively, M23 leaders and combatants remained present and operational in those towns and the surrounding areas. Other combatants from the disengaged zones were redeployed to other areas.<sup>40</sup> In January and February 2023, the Group of Experts also received evidence that M23 and RDF had moved troops along this axis, including through Rugari and Kibumba, to reinforce the western front towards Kitshanga and Sake. Such movements were not prevented by the Regional Force.<sup>41</sup> A similar pattern in which M23 did not vacate the area around Sake-Mushaki-Karuba was reported in mid-March 2023 and again in and around Bunagana in early April 2023.<sup>42</sup>

46. Although the front lines between M23 and FARDC remained calm in early April 2023, M23 failed to fully comply with the East African Community timetable adopted in mid-February, in which 30 March 2023 had been set as the deadline for complete withdrawal. For example, on 12 April 2023, M23 summoned economic actors for a meeting at M23 coordination offices in Rutshuru (see annex 21).

### **Multiplicity of military actors on the ground**

47. The period under review was characterized by the militarization of Goma town and the Sake area, as well as by the presence of multiple uniformed actors – namely FARDC supported by armed groups (paras. 71–90 below), MONUSCO peacekeepers, the East African Community Regional Force (see annex 22) and private military companies (see annex 23) – deployed to, among other aims, stop the territorial conquest by M23 and ease the military pressure on Goma town (paras. 40–42). Regional Force contingents were progressively deployed to areas and positions partially vacated by M23 (paras. 44–46 above), and the President of Angola announced the deployment of an Angolan contingent to ensure the projected cantonment of M23 in Maniema and protect the members of the Expanded Joint Verification Mechanism.

48. While East African Community Regional Force troops were not engaged in offensive operations, FARDC increasingly resorted to artillery and air strikes against M23 positions, slowing down the group’s progress towards Sake and precipitating its withdrawal from some positions, especially in the Sake and Mushaki areas.<sup>43</sup> The planning and support of private military companies to those FARDC operations, including from companies Agemira RDC and Congo Protection, has regularly been denounced by M23, which has claimed that the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo worked with “mercenaries” (see annex 24).

### **Organization, demands, troop reinforcement and training**

49. In addition to denouncing a lack of progress in the implementation of the Nairobi Declarations signed on 12 December 2013 (S/2022/479, para. 69), the M23 narrative has evolved. The armed group has increasingly focused on protecting the

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<sup>40</sup> The mission of the Group of Experts to Kibumba in January 2023 and interviews with over 40 sources, including the East African Community Regional Force.

<sup>41</sup> Documents and photographic evidence on file with the Group and interviews with over 30 sources.

<sup>42</sup> FARDC, private military companies, armed group combatants, civil society and MONUSCO sources.

<sup>43</sup> Still under the control of FARDC and private military companies at the time of drafting the present report.

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Tutsi community from an alleged genocide and the related necessity of neutralizing FDLR (para. 98 below). M23 requested a direct dialogue with the authorities of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and articulated new conditions for its own withdrawal, such as “the end of corruption” and “reform of the army”, de facto rejecting the requirements of the Luanda and Nairobi processes.<sup>44</sup>

50. The leadership of M23 (see annex 25) remained under the overall military command of sanctioned individual “General” Sultani Makenga (see also [S/2022/967](#), para. 35). The civilian-military structure of M23 was further consolidated, including with several FARDC officers and soldiers who joined M23.<sup>45</sup> According to several sources, sanctioned individual Baudoin Ngaruye (CDi.019) and M23 combatants under his command (see also [S/2013/433](#), paras. 14, 25, 29 and 52, text box page 6), all of whom were cantoned in Rwanda until recently, were brought to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in February 2023, to join M23, trained in Tshanzu and redeployed, including to Rwindi and Kisheshe area ([S/2022/479](#), para. 58).<sup>46</sup> The Group of Experts also documented the operational rapprochement between M23 and Twirwaneho, an armed group active in South Kivu (see paras. 142–145 below).

51. Captured and surrendered M23 combatants confirmed that “Colonel” Kanyamibwa continued to command military and ideological training in Tshanzu for new recruits, with the support of “Lieutenant” Moise and “Sous-Lieutenant” Masengechu, both reportedly former members of FARDC. New recruits were trained for between six and nine months; the most promising recruits were selected for the commando unit and benefited from specific training. In early March 2023, the training of new combatants was completed, bringing the total number of M23 combatants to approximately 3,000.<sup>47</sup>

### **Military equipment**

52. Photographic evidence and drone and video footage show M23 leaders and combatants wearing new matching uniforms, Kevlar helmets and bulletproof vests (see also [S/2022/967](#), para. 44). One surrendered M23 combatant, the aide of a leader of M23, confirmed that M23 had purchased new uniforms, but was unable to give details of the precise origin of those uniforms. M23 and/or RDF combatants were also equipped with VHF radios, night-vision equipment and vehicles. The variety and good condition of the military equipment recovered and documented in areas occupied by M23 and/or where RDF incursions and/or operations were conducted – including various types of assault rifles, heavy and light machine guns, various types of rocket-propelled grenade launchers, rockets, grenade launchers and grenades, recoilless guns, mortar shells and boxes of ammunition – provided some insight into the significant firepower of M23 (see annex 26).

53. Certain military equipment was produced recently and thus could not belong to the older M23 stockpiles from 2012 and 2013.<sup>48</sup> For example, several 40 mm anti-personnel rifle grenades and a box of 7.62 x 54 mm ammunition, both produced in 2021, as well as 12.7 x 108 ammunition and Kevlar helmets, all produced in 2020, were recovered in mid-March 2023 at abandoned M23 positions approximately 3–5 km north-east of Sake, Masisi territory (see annex 27). The Galil-type and AK-

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<sup>44</sup> Mouvement du 23 mars (M23) communiqués, interviews with M23 leaders, and MONUSCO sources.

<sup>45</sup> FARDC, M23 ex-combatants, researchers and MONUSCO and civil society sources.

<sup>46</sup> Researchers and M23 sources.

<sup>47</sup> M23 ex-combatants, researchers and intelligence sources.

<sup>48</sup> See, inter alia, the 2013 embargo assessment of M23 arsenal (document on file with the Secretariat) and [S/2012/348/Add.1](#).



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103-type assault rifles spotted, on 3 March 2023, in a mixed M23/Rwanda Defence Force camp, in Mushaki, had never before been documented on Democratic Republic of the Congo territory by the Group of Experts (see annex 26). This shows that either M23 had recently acquired new military hardware or the recovered equipment belonged to a regular army supporting M23 on the battlefield (see also [S/2022/967](#), para. 45).

### **Rwanda Defence Force incursions, military operations, and support to and organization of the Mouvement du 23 mars**

54. On 24 March 2023, in an official communiqué, FARDC reiterated the claims of the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo that RDF continued to operate under the guise of M23. On 29 March, military authorities claimed that Rwanda had sent reinforcements in the form of troops and equipment to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and that RDF and M23 troops had attacked Mweso town, Masisi territory (see annex 28 and [S/2022/967](#), para. 50). While the Government of Rwanda continued to deny that it provided support to M23, including in response to information requests from the Group of Experts, several Member States and the European Union called upon Rwanda to halt its support. Notably, the United States “reiterate[d] its call on Rwanda to end support for the United Nations-sanctioned Mouvement du 23 mars (M-23) and urge[d] Council members to consider how that kind of support [ran] afoul of the existing sanctions regimes”.<sup>49</sup>

55. The Group of Experts obtained further evidence – including documentary and photographic evidence and aerial footage – of military operations by soldiers clearly attired in RDF military uniform in Rutshuru, Masisi and Nyiragongo territories between November 2022 and March 2023 (see also [S/2022/967](#), paras. 47–51). Eyewitnesses, civil society actors, local authorities, armed group leaders and combatants, captured M23 combatants, Rwandan officials, two Rwandan intelligence officers and one RDF soldier, and diplomatic sources also reported the presence of RDF troops in border areas, towns occupied by M23 and newly created RDF and M23 positions in those three territories (see also paras. 86 and 88 below).

56. RDF troops conducted operations against FDLR and Rassemblement pour l’unité et la démocratie (RUD)-Urunana positions in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, with the aim, among other things, of neutralizing FDLR “Colonel” Ruvugayimikore Protogène (alias Ruhinda),<sup>50</sup> sanctioned FDLR military commander “General” Pacifique Ntawunguka (alias Omega) (CDi.024), and allied Congolese armed groups.<sup>51</sup> In mid-December 2022, “Colonel” Gavana, the leader of the RUD-Urunana, was reportedly killed in a targeted RDF operation.<sup>52</sup> The presence of RDF in Kisheshe and Bambu, Rutshuru territory, and Mushaki area, Masisi territory, was reported regularly prior to and after M23 had taken control of the areas, known for hosting numerous local armed groups and FDLR (see also paras. 67 and 86–90 below).<sup>53</sup> Several sources reported the killing of RDF members in those locations; killings that were attested to by documents collected on the battlefield (see annex 29).

57. RDF also engaged in specific operations and provided troop reinforcements to M23 with the aim of seizing or reinforcing strategic areas. For example, in a video

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<sup>49</sup> Security Council meetings, December 2022 ([S/PV.9215](#)) and March 2023 ([S/PV.9298](#)).

<sup>50</sup> See also [S/2022/967](#), annexes 31 and 34.

<sup>51</sup> Researchers, civil society sources and intelligence sources, RDF soldier.

<sup>52</sup> RDF intelligence, MONUSCO and armed group sources.

<sup>53</sup> Eyewitnesses, researchers, Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR), Collectif des mouvements pour le changement (CMC) and civil society sources, and drone footage.

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shot on 15 November 2022, at least 25 combatants, reportedly members of RDF,<sup>54</sup> were shown marching in columns in Kiwanja town, which had been under M23 control since 29 October 2022 (see annex 30). In addition, in February and March 2023, RDF soldiers of the eleventh battalion commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Alex Nkuranga were present in Mushaki and Karuba areas,<sup>55</sup> Masisi territory, where they fought against FDLR, Alliance des patriotes pour un Congo libre et souverain (APCLS) and Nyatura-Abazungu (Alliance des nationalistes congolais pour la défense de droits humains/Alliance de force de défense du peuple) elements.<sup>56</sup> On 7 March 2023, combatants wearing military uniforms and weapons similar to those of RDF were spotted on a fortified hill in Karuba (see annex 31). The Group of Experts also obtained a notebook recovered at a mixed M23/RDF position, in Mushaki, containing handwritten notes in English and Kinyarwanda detailing the names and grades of suspected RDF soldiers and commanders sent on mission in the area, the use of 82 mm and 60 mm mortars and the mission, which was articulated as “destroying the armed forces by breaking their integration” (see annex 32). Aerial footage and photographic evidence confirmed the presence of RDF soldiers on Democratic Republic of the Congo territory (see annex 33).

58. Multiple independent reliable sources of diverse background, including one RDF soldier and several eyewitnesses, reported that RDF troops arrived from the Rwandan side of the border and entered the Democratic Republic of the Congo through various entry points (see annex 34).<sup>57</sup>

59. The Group of Experts received information confirming that, on the ground, operations by RDF, including those by RDF special and reserve forces, were coordinated by Brigadier General Andrew Nyanvumba (see also [S/2022/967](#), annex 29).<sup>58</sup> Deployed RDF troops included members of the 201st and 301st brigades,<sup>59</sup> as well as members of the RDF special forces, commanded by Captain Niragire Jean Pierre (alias Gasasira),<sup>60</sup> who were deployed for specific operations from May 2022 onward. Gasasira, in turn, received instructions from Major General Ruki Karusisi, the overall commander of the RDF Special Operations Force.<sup>61</sup> Major General Alexis Kagame, who commanded several RDF operations on Democratic Republic of the Congo territory in 2022 (see [S/2022/967](#), annex 32), was recalled to Kigali and replaced by Major General Emmy Ruvusha.<sup>62</sup>

60. Several sources with knowledge of the matter, including two RDF intelligence personnel, uniformed personnel and sources close to M23, reported to the Group of Experts that the objective of the RDF military actions on Democratic Republic of the Congo territory, labelled “North Kivu operations” was to reinforce M23 by providing troops and materiel and to use them to secure control over mine sites, gain political influence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo<sup>63</sup> and decimate

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<sup>54</sup> Eyewitnesses, civil society and diplomatic sources, and armed group combatants.

<sup>55</sup> RDF soldier, researcher and eyewitnesses.

<sup>56</sup> RDF soldier, researcher and eyewitnesses, armed group combatants and civil society sources.

<sup>57</sup> Civil society sources, local authorities, diplomats, researchers.

<sup>58</sup> Researchers, RDF soldier and Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and diplomatic sources.

<sup>59</sup> The 201st brigade included members of the sixth, nineteenth and twenty-fifth battalions and reserve forces (see also [S/2022/967](#), annex 29). The 301st brigade included members of the fourth and eleventh battalions and reserve forces.

<sup>60</sup> The Group of Experts documented that, in 2020, Gasasira cooperated with, among others, FARDC Colonel Claude Rusumbi and General Gahizi in Rutshuru territory when conducting operations against FDLR ([S/2020/1283](#), paras. 36–41). Researchers, FARDC sources and documentary and photographic evidence.

<sup>61</sup> Researchers, sources close to M23 and RDF intelligence sources.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> RDF intelligence, researchers, sources from the Office of the President of the Democratic

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FDLR.<sup>64</sup> The Group notes that, to date, the North Kivu operations have been unsuccessful in achieving those objectives.

61. According to two RDF intelligence personnel, one RDF officer, three researchers and foreign intelligence services, the North Kivu operations were designed and coordinated by General James Kabarebe, who is currently the Defence and Security Adviser to the President of Rwanda (see also [S/2012/843](#), text box page 10). Kabarebe received support for the implementation of the operations from, among others, General Jean Bosco Kazura, Lieutenant General Mubarakh Muganga, Major General Franck Mugambage, Major General Vincent Nyakarundi, Major General Ruki Karusisi, Major General Eric Murokore and Brigadier General Rugumyangabo Gacinya (see annex 35).

### **Tensions between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda**

62. The territorial expansion of M23 and the operations led by FARDC and allied armed groups against M23, which have been denounced by the Government of Rwanda on several occasions (see also [S/2022/967](#), paras. 64–71), have worsened already tense relations between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda.<sup>65</sup> Tensions were heightened when, on 24 January 2023, RDF shot at a Sukhoi (SU-25) fighter jet belonging to FARDC over Goma, in Congolese airspace, while the jet was approaching Goma airport for landing (see annex 36).

### **Abuses against civilians perpetrated by the Mouvement du 23 mars, including killings, arbitrary arrests, torture, rape and forced labour**

63. The Group of Experts documented multiple violations of international humanitarian law and serious human rights abuses perpetrated by M23 fighters in areas under their control (see paras. 41 and 42 above), including killings and rapes.<sup>66</sup> The acts listed henceforward constitute acts that are sanctionable pursuant to paragraph 7 (e) of Security Council resolution [2293 \(2016\)](#), the measures contained in which were renewed by the Council, by its resolution [2641 \(2022\)](#).

64. Civilians in areas occupied by M23 reported living in fear of persecution, as individuals suspected of collaborating with the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, FARDC or with “enemy armed groups” were arbitrarily arrested, detained and sometimes tortured to death. Some individuals taken by M23 have disappeared without a trace (see annex 37).<sup>67</sup> Witnesses living in areas under M23 control, including a local leader installed by M23, spoke of a “duty” to denounce suspected FARDC or enemy armed group collaborators.<sup>68</sup>

65. The Group of Experts documented a pattern of both indiscriminate and targeted killings of civilians by M23, a shift in tactics compared with the previous reporting period. In particular, operations against FDLR strongholds coincided with the killing of civilians as punishment for being suspected of being relatives or supporters of FDLR or of other armed groups hostile to M23,<sup>69</sup> especially when

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Republic of the Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo security sources close to Twirwaneho, Twirwaneho and M23 ex-combatants, and diplomatic sources.

<sup>64</sup> RDF soldier, M23 ex-combatants, researchers, armed group sources and eyewitnesses.

<sup>65</sup> See also: Jeune Afrique, “Paul Kagame: M23 en RDC, Tshisekedi, Macron, présidentielle au Rwanda... L’entretien exclusif en video”, video, 31 January 2023.

<sup>66</sup> Based on over 50 interviews with victims, witnesses, researchers, civil society, community leaders and governmental, humanitarian and MONUSCO sources, as well as on photographic, video and documentary evidence.

<sup>67</sup> Testimonies of relatives of victims, civilians living in areas under M23 control, researchers and civil society and MONUSCO sources.

<sup>68</sup> Local leaders who collaborated with M23, and community members.

<sup>69</sup> Community leader, local witnesses, researchers and MONUSCO and humanitarian sources.

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M23 was faced with some local resistance to the occupation (paras. 66 and 67 below). The Group also documented summary executions of civilians and captured or suspected combatants by M23 (see annex 38) and the rape of dozens of women (paras. 68 and 69 below). M23 also systematically pillaged the goods and crops of the local population and forced local people to contribute to rations for M23 combatants.<sup>70</sup>

### **Killings at Kisheshe on 29 November 2022**

66. M23 conducted a series of revenge killings targeting civilians in the town of Kisheshe, on 29 November 2022, following an armed confrontation with local armed groups, notably FDLR and Mai-Mai. M23 denied the killing of civilians, claiming that “only” eight had perished in crossfire (see annex 39).<sup>71</sup> However, investigations conducted by the Group of Experts revealed that over 100 people had been killed after M23 conducted a house-to-house search, executing unarmed civilians, mostly men and boys, some as young as 12 years of age, on the basis of assumptions that they were combatants or supporters of enemy armed groups, without carrying out any verification so as to ascertain their identity. Following the takeover of Kisheshe, M23 combatants systematically looted civilian property and raped several women.<sup>72</sup> A detailed presentation of the Group’s findings on this incident is contained in annex 40.

### **Killings in Kazaroho in February 2023**

67. Evidence collected by the Group of Experts confirmed the killing of at least 11 individuals, including a woman and two children,<sup>73</sup> in Kazaroho, on or around 26 February 2023. According to witnesses, the victims were killed by M23 while harvesting crops on agricultural fields previously controlled by FDLR. Kazaroho, formerly the seat of the FDLR sector headquarters, was a key target of M23 and RDF operations (see annex 41).<sup>74</sup> According to witnesses, the killings were committed by M23 as punishment against those presumed to be FDLR members and their relatives, as there had been no armed confrontation with FDLR prior to the killings. Photographs obtained by the Group depicted bodies of victims; some had been killed with their arms tied behind their backs. Numerous houses were burned, some of them were confirmed to belong to FDLR or their dependants. A detailed presentation of the Group’s findings on this incident is contained in annex 42.

### **Rapes in areas controlled by the Mouvement du 23 mars**

68. Numerous rapes were reported in areas under M23 control, perpetrated by M23 combatants.<sup>75</sup> Individuals working with sexual violence survivors documented at least 60 women, including eight minor girls, who had been raped by M23 combatants in Rutshuru territory since November 2022.<sup>76</sup> The Group of Experts interviewed 12 women, including one minor,<sup>77</sup> who had been raped when they returned to their abandoned homes in search of food. The women described the

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<sup>70</sup> Direct witnesses, victims, community leaders, civil society sources, researchers.

<sup>71</sup> M23 communiqué of 3 December 2022, signed by the President of M23, Bertrand Bisimwa.

<sup>72</sup> Testimonies of eyewitnesses and victims from Kisheshe, community leaders, researchers and civil society and MONUSCO sources.

<sup>73</sup> According to the most conservative figures reported by witnesses, including locals who participated in the collection of bodies, researchers, civil society and FDLR sources.

<sup>74</sup> Witnesses, researchers, civil society and MONUSCO sources, and a public announcement on an M23-affiliated Twitter account.

<sup>75</sup> Community leaders, witnesses, and NGO and civil society sources.

<sup>76</sup> Statistics provided by professional staff working with sexual violence survivors in Nyiragongo territory.

<sup>77</sup> All internally displaced persons living in the Kanyaruchinya internally displaced person camp.

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attackers as M23 combatants wearing full military uniform, being well armed and speaking “Kinyarwanda from Rwanda” (see annex 43).

69. The Group of Experts also documented the rape of more than 20 women and girls in or near Bambo, in Bwito *chefferie*, on or after M23 took control of the town on 21 November 2022.<sup>78</sup> The Group interviewed three women who had been gang-raped by M23 combatants in similar circumstances. A young woman had been gang-raped while sheltering in a house with six other women. Twelve men, whom she identified as Kinyarwanda-speaking M23 combatants, took turns raping the seven women. A striking similarity in the testimonies of the three women is that they were all asked for the whereabouts of their husbands before being raped. One was told that she was a “Nyatura wife” because of her braided hair. On the basis of evidence collected, the Group noted a trend in rapes being used to punish or humiliate women presumed to be relatives of enemy combatants. A detailed presentation of the evidence is contained in annex 44.

### **Forced labour**

70. M23 combatants systematically used civilians to carry out forced labour, notably to transport ammunition and looted goods, or to do *salongo*, or mandatory community service.<sup>79</sup> Those who refused faced punishment; some were killed (see annex 45).<sup>80</sup>

### **Armed group coalitions and coordination by the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo**

71. In May 2022, the President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Tshisekedi Tshilombo, called upon the military hierarchy to refrain from using proxies in the fight against M23. Nonetheless, the Group of Experts has continued to document the clear engagement of a coalition of armed groups alongside FARDC in fighting M23 (S/2022/967, paras. 64–71). The engagement of armed groups – crucial for constraining M23 advances – was organized, coordinated and supported by senior FARDC officers.

72. In fact, armed groups have increased recruitment; restructured, defined and coordinated their areas of armed operations; and rearmed themselves in response to the rapid territorial expansion of M23 and the intensity of the fighting (see paras. 40–43 above).

### **Recruitment and remobilization of ex-combatants**

73. Between December 2022 and January 2023, to reinforce their ranks in Walikale, Masisi and Rutshuru territories, APCLS recruited 200 combatants, the Nduma défense du Congo-Rénové (NDC-R) faction led by sanctioned individual Guidon Shimiray Mwisa (CDi.033) recruited 305 combatants and the Collectif des mouvements pour le changement /Forces d’autodéfense du peuple congolais (CMC-FAPC) led by “General” Bigabo recruited 241 combatants (see annex 46).<sup>81</sup> Collectif des mouvements pour le changement/Forces de défense du peuple (CMC/FDP) led by “General” Dominique Ndarahutse (alias Domi) and FDLR also intensified their recruitment drives (see para. 87 below).

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<sup>78</sup> Rape victims, community leaders, witness working with rape survivors, researchers and MONUSCO sources.

<sup>79</sup> In addition to M23, other armed groups also regularly impose *salongo* on the local population.

<sup>80</sup> Civil society sources, community leaders, researchers, eyewitnesses and victims.

<sup>81</sup> Armed group combatants, local authorities, researchers and FARDC and civil society sources.

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74. Demobilized combatants who had been cantoned in a demobilization centre in Mumbambiro, close to Sake, Masisi territory, decamped and joined either local armed groups, FDLR or M23.<sup>82</sup> The few remaining combatants were sent home and the centre was temporarily closed on 5 February 2023.<sup>83</sup>

#### **Armed group alliance to counter the Mouvement du 23 mars**

75. Local armed groups active in North Kivu organized themselves into a coalition called Alliance des résistants de la patrie (ARP). The leader of APCLS, “General” Janvier Buingo Karahiri, led the alliance, and NDC-R leader Guidon Shimirayi Mwisa oversaw logistics and operations with the assistance of “General” Dominique Narahutse (alias Domi), leader of CMC/FDP.<sup>84</sup>

76. Local armed groups joined the alliance to fight alongside FARDC. In Walikale and Masisi territories, these included CMC/FDP, Alliance des nationalistes congolais pour la défense de droits humains/Alliance de force de défense du peuple, APCLS, NDC-R (led by Guidon) and Mai-Mai Kifuafua. In Rutshuru territory, these groups included the Mouvement patriotique d’autodéfense (MPA), the Collectif des mouvements pour le changement/Forces armées du peuple congolais (CMC/FAPC), NDC-R/Bwira (now led by Mapenzi).<sup>85</sup> Lastly, FDLR, also part of the coalition, mostly operated as a distinct unit also known as “the fifth column”.<sup>86</sup>

77. The Group of Experts received consistent information regarding the participation of the armed groups of the coalition in operations against M23 and RDF, including in Kitshanga and Rubaya, in January and late February 2023, respectively (see annex 47).<sup>87</sup>

78. In November 2022, the armed group known as Coalition des patriotes résistants congolais/Force de frappe (PARECO/FF) re-emerged, reportedly to fight M23 and RDF and defend the territorial integrity of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (see also [S/2008/773](#), paras. 114–120).<sup>88</sup> PARECO/FF was led by the former M23 leader, Sendugu Hakizimana (alias Museveni) (see annex 48 and [S/2012/843](#), para. 46).

#### **Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo coordination**

79. Multiple sources informed the Group of Experts that FARDC Generals Janvier Mayanga (see also [S/2008/773](#), paras. 116 and 117) and Hassan Mugabo-Baguma (see also [S/2015/19](#), paras. 169 and 170) were sent to North Kivu to supervise operations, and to mobilize and coordinate armed groups in support of FARDC.<sup>89</sup> Multiple reliable, independent sources of diverse background have stressed that this cooperation was endorsed by national military authorities,<sup>90</sup> in particular the head of the Maison Militaire of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, General Franck Ntumba, and the Chief of Army Staff, General Christian Tshiwewe Songesha.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> FARDC sources, armed groups’ combatants, local authorities and researchers.

<sup>83</sup> The visit of the Group of Experts to Sake and Mumbambiro, February and March 2023.

<sup>84</sup> Armed group combatants, FARDC and civil society sources, researchers and local authorities.

<sup>85</sup> See [S/2022/967](#), annex 51.

<sup>86</sup> Ex-combatants, armed groups leaders, FARDC and civil society sources.

<sup>87</sup> Ex-combatants, armed groups leaders, FARDC and civil society sources.

<sup>88</sup> Local authorities, FARDC and security sources, armed group leaders and combatants, civil society sources and researchers.

<sup>89</sup> FARDC and security sources, local authorities, ex-combatants, researchers, civil society, MONUSCO and intelligence sources.

<sup>90</sup> FARDC and intelligence sources, armed group combatants, civil society sources and researchers.

<sup>91</sup> FARDC and intelligence sources, armed group combatants, researchers, civil society, Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and security sources.

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80. In late December 2022 and early January 2023, General Chico Tshitambwe (see also [S/2009/603](#), para. 44), then second-in-command of operations against M23, convened at least three meetings between the official military hierarchy and armed group leaders in Goma to seal this collaboration.<sup>92</sup> At the January meeting, attended also by FDLR-Forces combattantes abacunguzi (FOCA), each armed group leader received \$5,000 and assurances that they would be provided with adequate weaponry.<sup>93</sup> During the same period, armed group leaders met with Generals Mayanga and Mugabo to agree on logistics and financial support to ARP. For example, a coordination meeting was held at Hotel Nyarusumba in Kitshanga on 10 and 11 December 2022.<sup>94</sup>

81. FARDC Colonel Salomon Tokolonga (see also [S/2022/967](#), para. 65) served as a contact point between FARDC military hierarchy and armed groups. He coordinated several operations and weapons supplies.<sup>95</sup> The leader of NDC-R, Guidon, and the chief of staff of NDC-R in Kitshanga, Deo Bafosse Mparanyi, are shown in several pictures and in a video, together with Colonel Tokolonga, in December 2022 (see annex 49).

82. Multiple sources reported that, at the instruction of Generals Mayanga and Mugabo, FARDC provided armed groups with uniforms, weapons, ammunition, generators, fuel, food and monetary incentives.<sup>96</sup> FARDC also distributed red armbands so as to be able to identify and distinguish friendly armed groups from the enemy.<sup>97</sup>

83. ARP coalition combatants told the Group of Experts that armed group leaders conditioned their participation on a series of demands.<sup>98</sup> For example, NDC-R/Guidon expected the arrest warrant issued by the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo against Guidon to be lifted, FDLR-FOCA requested the release of its members that had been detained by the Government and APCLS requested to join FARDC as a special unit.

84. Armed group combatants and leaders complained about ineffective coordination and personal antagonism within the FARDC hierarchy, FARDC soldiers decamping in the face of M23 and Rwanda Defence Force attacks and insufficient and inadequate ammunition provided by FARDC. Frequent changes in FARDC command created instability for FARDC soldiers and all other combatants engaged in the fighting (see annex 50).

85. On 3 March 2023, the Cabinet of the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo met and an agreement was reached on a draft law related to the creation of a reserve defence force. While that agreement was interpreted to mean allowing elements of local armed groups to be enrolled in the national reserve forces,<sup>99</sup> the Government issued a statement denying it.<sup>100</sup> However, the Group of

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<sup>92</sup> Armed group combatants, local authorities, researchers and civil society, FARDC, intelligence and security sources.

<sup>93</sup> Armed group leaders and combatants, researchers and diplomatic sources.

<sup>94</sup> Armed group leaders, researchers, local authorities and intelligence, civil society and MONUSCO sources.

<sup>95</sup> Armed group combatants, local authorities, researchers and civil society and intelligence sources.

<sup>96</sup> Armed groups combatants, researchers, FARDC and civil society, security, intelligence and diplomatic sources.

<sup>97</sup> Ex-combatants, local authorities and FARDC, intelligence and civil society sources.

<sup>98</sup> Active and ex-combatants, researchers and FARDC, civil society, security and intelligence sources.

<sup>99</sup> Minutes of the Cabinet meeting of the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, 3 March 2023. See also: "En RDC, des miliciens pourraient-ils devenir des réservistes de l'armée ?", *Jeune Afrique*, 13 March 2023.

<sup>100</sup> Armed group leaders, researchers, civil society and diplomatic sources.

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Experts was informed of a meeting, held in Goma, on 13 April 2023, and presided over by General Constant Ndima, during which the deployment of almost 6,000 combatants and ex-combatants to constitute the reserve force – paid and equipped by FARDC – was projected (see annex 51).<sup>101</sup> The Group is concerned that the incorporation of armed groups into a reserve force would undermine both the Nairobi process and the Disarmament, Demobilization, Community Recovery and Stabilization Programme.

**Structure of the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda-Forces combattantes abacunguzi and cooperation with the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and local armed groups**

86. FDLR-FOCA, under the political leadership of sanctioned individual “Lieutenant General” Gaston Iyamuremye (CDi.003)<sup>102</sup> and the military command of “General” Pacifique Ntawunguka (alias Omega Israel) (CDi.024) (S/2017/1091, para. 15 and S/2022/479, paras. 73 and 74), remained active in North Kivu.<sup>103</sup> During attacks by M23 and RDF on FDLR-FOCA bases in December 2022, the latter’s spokesperson, known as Fontaine, was killed. Niyiturinda Placide (alias Cure Ngoma), assured communication thereafter (see para. 80). FDLR-FOCA remained active in Rutshuru and Nyiragongo territories.<sup>104</sup>

87. In addition to recruiting and training combatants for other armed groups,<sup>105</sup> FDLR-FOCA recruited and trained new combatants to reinforce its special unit, known as the Commando de recherche et d’action en profondeur, under the command of “Colonel” Ruvugayimikore Ruhinda.<sup>106</sup> FDLR-FOCA recruited mainly in Rutshuru and Masisi territories. After being trained by “Colonels” Taffi and Makoma, the best combatants were sent to “General” Omega in Kibirizi, Rutshuru territory, who registered and dispatched them to various protection and combat units, including the Commando de recherche et d’action en profondeur unit. In early February 2023, between 150 and 170 newly trained elements joined the unit.<sup>107</sup>

88. The Commando de recherche et d’action en profondeur, comprising between 300 and 500 elements, defended FDLR-FOCA positions in Bwisa, Buhara, Kazahoro, Mozambique, Paris, Suncity and , Rutshuru and Nyiragongo territories, when M23 and RDF launched a wave of attacks between November 2022 and February 2023.<sup>108</sup> The Group of Experts notes that FDLR withdrew from several positions, exposing the population to reprisal attacks (see paras. 66 and 67 above).

89. FDLR-FOCA closely collaborated with local armed groups and FARDC.<sup>109</sup> “Colonel” Ruhinda attended several planning meetings with FARDC in Kitshanga on 10 and 11 December 2022 (see para. 80 above) and again on 10 January 2023, and was provided with weapons and ammunition by FARDC.<sup>110</sup> Within the same

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<sup>101</sup> FARDC officer and armed group combatants.

<sup>102</sup> Also known as Byiringiro Victor Rumuli, Victor Rumuri, Michel Byiringiro, Victor Byiringiro and Rumuli.

<sup>103</sup> FDLR ex-combatants, researchers, local authorities, and security and civil society sources.

<sup>104</sup> Ex-combatants, local authorities, researchers, and civil society and FARDC sources.

<sup>105</sup> Including for CMC/FDP (Domi) and the Alliance des patriotes pour un Congo libre et souverain. See also S/2022/479, annex 41.

<sup>106</sup> FDLR ex-combatants, researchers, local authorities, and security and civil society sources.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> Ex-combatants, FDLR spokesperson, researchers, and intelligence and security sources.

<sup>109</sup> Ex-combatants, FDLR spokesperson, researchers, and diplomatic, intelligence and security sources.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.



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period, several sources reported that “General” Omega had held meetings in Goma with FARDC military hierarchy to discuss collaboration.<sup>111</sup>

90. FDLR-FOCA sources indicated that they had fought alongside FARDC and local armed groups to defend their positions and dependants from M23 attacks.<sup>112</sup> For example, they had fought with CMC/FDP in Tongo, Kibirizi and Kikuku, and with APCLS in Birambizo, Rusekera, Shonyi, Kitshanga and Rubaya.<sup>113</sup>

### **C. Threats to the tin, tantalum and tungsten supply chain in Rubaya**

91. The Group of Experts received information regarding the involvement of armed groups in the exploitation and smuggling of tin, tantalum and tungsten minerals in Rubaya. The Group notes that the involvement of armed elements in the supply chain (see also [S/2021/560](#), para. 58) undermines the integrity of the supply chain of those minerals.

92. Elements of the armed groups Nyatura-Abazungu and PARECO/FF made incursions into mining sites in Rubaya to impose taxes on artisanal miners ([S/2021/560](#), paras. 57–71).<sup>114</sup> While those incursions were sporadic until late 2022, they became more frequent following the advance of M23, which, for example, drove the Nyatura group from its base in Masisi territory closer to Luke village in Nyamaboko grouping, near Rubaya. Mining police in Rubaya town were tolerant of Nyatura-Abazungu and PARECO/FF incursions into the mining sites, as they considered them to be FARDC allies in the fight against M23.<sup>115</sup> The Group of Experts was informed that, in recent months, those armed groups had consolidated control over Rubaya mine sites and their relationships with the smuggling networks operating in the area.<sup>116</sup>

93. On 10 February 2023, Société minière de Bisunzu, the company that held the rights to the main production sites around Rubaya, suspended its activities and left the site with all personnel. Miners, who were mostly members of the Cooperative des exploitants artisanaux miniers de Masisi, nevertheless continued to work, including at the company’s sites.

94. On 26 February 2023, M23 occupied Rubaya, but was driven out a few days later by local armed groups.

95. On 28 February 2023, following the discovery of a cache of weapons on his property in Masisi, the head of Société minière de Bisunzu, Edouard Mwangachuchu Hizi, a member of Parliament representing the Congrès national pour la défense du peuple ([S/2008/773](#), para. 19), was arrested and subsequently charged with serious crimes, including treason and criminal association.<sup>117</sup>

96. On 15 March 2023, the activities and exports of Société minière de Bisunzu were suspended by the Minister of Mines (see annex 52), who alleged that the company was exploiting minerals within the perimeter of a site operated by Société aurifère du Kivu et du Maniema, a government portfolio company.

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<sup>111</sup> Combatants, researchers and security, military intelligence and civil society sources.

<sup>112</sup> Ex-combatants, researchers and military intelligence and civil society sources.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid.

<sup>114</sup> Rubaya-based diggers and a security source.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid.

<sup>116</sup> Civil society and security sources.

<sup>117</sup> Civil society sources and Democratic Republic of the Congo officials. See also: “Procès du député Édouard Mwangachuchu en RDC: le contenu d’un coffre-fort saisi révélé”, *RFI*, 12 April 2023.

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97. The Group of Experts received information that, although production continued in Rubaya, the traceability process had been suspended, rendering all minerals extracted from the area ineligible for the international market. Several sources reported that the minerals were being smuggled towards Rwanda and South Kivu Province, where they were being tagged and laundered through various mining sites.<sup>118</sup>

## **D. Escalating ethnic tensions in the context of the territorial expansion of the Mouvement du 23 mars**

### **Instrumentalizing genocide narrative**

98. M23 exploited the narrative that it was protecting the Congolese Tutsi and Banyamulenge communities in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo from extermination in order to justify its aggressive territorial expansion in North Kivu (see para. 49 above). In public communiqués, M23 referred to an “imminent genocide” against the Tutsi community it purported to protect, thereby inextricably linking the Tutsi community to its belligerent and expansionist objectives. This narrative was similarly used by Rwanda, as well as Twirwaneho, with regard to the Banyamulenge community (see annex 53).

99. Perversely, this genocide narrative created a dangerously fertile ground for the fearmongering, hateful discourse and violent reprisals, including killings, against the above-mentioned communities by those who opposed M23 (see annex 54 and [S/2022/967](#), paras. 72–75). Members of the Tutsi community interviewed by the Group of Experts confirmed that incidents of violence, including the killing of Tutsi civilians, had coincided with the resurgence of M23.<sup>119</sup>

100. The Group of Experts notes that, while incidents of violence against Rwandophone communities in the current context were beyond doubt, the manipulation of the genocide narrative by M23 and the Rwandan authorities has significantly increased the risk of civilians being targeted and could trigger widespread inter-ethnic violence between communities.

### **Hate speech**

101. The crisis related to M23 accentuated ethnic rifts among the warring sides and continued to stoke xenophobia and hate speech against Rwandophone populations<sup>120</sup> living in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, notably the Tutsis and the Banyamulenge (see also [S/2022/967](#), paras. 72–75).<sup>121</sup>

102. Hateful and belligerent rhetoric intended to vilify Rwandophones, perceived to support M23, continued to be propagated by political figures, civil society actors, local populists, activists and members of the Congolese diaspora and was amplified on social media. The common thread in such xenophobic discourse was the narrative that Rwandophones, including Tutsis and Banyamulenge, were alien ethnic groups who should return to Rwanda. In the context of the upcoming elections, this discourse has morphed into calls for the exclusion of Rwandophones from voter

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<sup>118</sup> Civil society sources, Rubaya-based miners and traders.

<sup>119</sup> Witness testimonies, community leaders and civil society and MONUSCO sources.

<sup>120</sup> The term “Rwandophone” comprises the Kinyamulenge- and Kinyarwanda-speaking groups, such as the Banyamulenge in South Kivu, who are mainly Tutsi, and the Banyarwanda of North Kivu, comprising both the Hutu and Tutsi communities.

<sup>121</sup> Witnesses, researchers, media analysis and civil society and MONUSCO sources.

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registration.<sup>122</sup> Specific incidents of mob violence against and the harassment of Rwandophones at voting registration centres instantly followed (see annex 55).

103. Explicit threats to kill Rwandophones were also made by some extremist figures (see annex 56).<sup>123</sup> The Group of Experts documented several incidents of lynching, arbitrary killings and mob violence, which were causally linked to the increase in xenophobic discourse against Rwandophones<sup>124</sup> (see annex 57 and [S/2022/967](#), para. 74). Demonstrations against the East African Community Regional Force and MONUSCO, in Goma on 6 and 7 February 2023, took on an unexpected ethnic dimension, as several homes, businesses and churches belonging to or used by Rwandophones were attacked and vandalized by demonstrators (see annex 58). Rwandophones were harassed and threatened throughout the city, forcing many into hiding.<sup>125</sup>

## IV. Ituri

### A. Factions of the Coopérative pour le développement du Congo

104. The Coopérative pour le développement du Congo/Union des révolutionnaires pour la défense du peuple congolais (CODECO/URDPC) faction remained extremely violent, despite its unilateral commitment to the cessation of hostilities and its participation in the Nairobi process ([S/2022/967](#), paras. 82–86).<sup>126</sup> Its areas of operations extended from Djugu to Mahagi territory. CODECO/URDPC principally targeted civilians, in addition to Zaïre, FARDC and Congolese National Police elements, be it in retaliation or to deter attacks or obtain weapons.

105. Whereas the leadership structure of CODECO/URDPC remained unchanged (see annex 59), the faction's modus operandi became more coordinated and was increasingly controlled from its headquarters located in Ndalo, Walendu-Pitsi sector, Djugu territory.<sup>127</sup>

106. CODECO/URDPC sources claimed that the armed group had between 25,000 and 40,000 combatants within its ranks, while other sources believed the total to be roughly between 10,000 and 15,000 combatants.<sup>128</sup>

107. According to the CODECO/URDPC leadership, all other CODECO factions had been absorbed into URDPC ([S/2022/967](#), paras. 82 and 83). Under this set-up, the Force de défense contre la balkanisation du Congo (also known as Force contre la balkanisation du Congo), the Armée de libération du Congo, CODECO/Bon temple de Dieu and CODECO/Catholique had delegates at the CODECO/URDPC headquarters and operated under its leadership. Decisions to retaliate, to launch or claim responsibility for attacks or to negotiate the release of hostages emanated from the CODECO/URDPC leadership.<sup>129</sup> CODECO/URDPC leadership added that

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<sup>122</sup> Analysis of public statements, civil society sources, researchers, MONUSCO sources and Rwandophone community members.

<sup>123</sup> Public statements and videos shared on social media.

<sup>124</sup> Witnesses, researchers and civil society and MONUSCO sources.

<sup>125</sup> Video footage and open-source information on social media, members of the Tutsi and Banyamulege communities, and civil society and MONUSCO sources.

<sup>126</sup> [S/2022/479](#), paras. 81–83.

<sup>127</sup> Researchers, civil society and intelligence sources, FARDC and Congolese National Police sources, and ex-combatants.

<sup>128</sup> Sources from the Disarmament, Demobilization, Community Recovery and Stabilization Programme, local authorities, and civil society, FARDC, intelligence and security sources.

<sup>129</sup> Researchers, ex-combatants, Coopérative pour le développement du Congo (CODECO) leadership, civil society sources, military intelligence sources, and FARDC and Congolese

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operational instructions on potential operations were delivered to combatants during meetings or through social media platforms.

108. CODECO/URDPC intensified its attacks along the RN27 road, in the mining area of Mongbwalu and in the Bahema-Nord, Bahema-Badjere and Banyali-Kilo *chefferies*.<sup>130</sup> Other attacks were reported in Djugu centre and Tchomia (paras. 125–128 below). CODECO/URDPC conducted significant attacks on FARDC positions, notably between January and March 2023, resulting in the seizure of weapons and ammunition.<sup>131</sup> For instance, on 28 January 2023, CODECO/URDPC attacked the 3401st Regiment of FARDC, based in Njala, killing 17 FARDC elements, wounding 14 and stealing 14 AK-type assault rifles, 2 PKM-type machine guns and nine boxes of ammunition (see annex 60).

109. Concomitant with and subsequent to the participation of CODECO/URDPC in the talks held in Nairobi, in November 2022, the Group of Experts documented a spree of deadly attacks on civilians attributed to the armed group, targeting civilians associated with the rival armed group Zaïre (paras. 124–128 below).

110. The spree of violent attacks on government forces and civilians contradicted the commitment made by CODECO/URDPC to end hostilities and posed a serious threat to peace and security in the region. CODECO/URDPC leaders defended the attacks as retaliation for atrocities that had been committed by Zaïre elements in their community. On 7 February 2023, an organization known as G5, representing five communities that had been victims of attacks by the various CODECO factions,<sup>132</sup> sent a letter to the facilitator of the Nairobi process, Uhuru Kenyatta, in which it requested the exclusion of CODECO/URDPC from the talks and the deployment of the East African Community Regional Force to fight the armed group (see annex 61). At the time of writing, no such decision had been taken.

111. CODECO/URDPC elements remained in control of mining sites, drawing resources therefrom, including to purchase weapons and ammunition.<sup>133</sup> Additional resources were drawn from taxation of and contributions from members of the Lendu community and from the proceeds of kidnappings.<sup>134</sup>

112. In December 2022, CODECO/URDPC, the Front patriotique et intégrationniste du Congo (FPIC), also known as Chini ya Kilima,<sup>135</sup> and the Force de résistance patriotique d'Ituri forged an alliance known as G3.<sup>136</sup> According to several sources, the purpose of the alliance was to share views and harmonize strategies ahead of the third inter-Congolese dialogue under the EAC-led Nairobi process of 6 December 2022.<sup>137</sup> The alliance had not yet translated into an operational partnership to carry out joint attacks at the time of drafting the present report.

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National Police sources.

<sup>130</sup> Researchers, ex-combatants, military intelligence sources, and FARDC, Congolese National Police and MONUSCO sources.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid.

<sup>132</sup> Alur, Hema, Ndo Okebo, Mambisa and Nyali.

<sup>133</sup> Researchers, intelligence sources, and FARDC and Congolese National Police sources.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid.

<sup>135</sup> S/2021/560, para. 102; and S/2022/479, paras. 124–129.

<sup>136</sup> CODECO leadership, combatants, researchers and FARDC, Congolese National Police, intelligence and civil society sources.

<sup>137</sup> CODECO leadership and combatants, Front patriotique et intégrationniste (FPIC) ex-combatants, researchers, FARDC, Congolese National Police, intelligence and civil society sources.

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## **B. Internal tensions in Zaïre/Mouvement d'autodéfense populaire de l'Ituri**

113. The armed group Zaïre continued to be involved in armed violence in Djugu and Mahagi territories.<sup>138</sup> Zaïre continued to launch attacks on rival CODECO factions, FARDC camps, Congolese National Police elements and civilians in Djugu, Mahagi and Irumu territories (see para. 127 below).

114. Zaïre also faced internal tensions.<sup>139</sup> On 22 December 2022, a new movement called the Mouvement d'autodéfense populaire de l'Ituri (MAPI) was created and claimed to be the official representation of Zaïre. MAPI claimed to represent the Hema community and drew some of its members from Zaïre. It expressed its willingness to join the Nairobi process, which Zaïre had not joined.

115. The leadership of MAPI was composed of some former leaders of Zaïre (see annex 62). On 23 January 2023, the creation of MAPI was officially announced at the premises of the Ituri provincial government, thereby benefiting from the endorsement of the provincial authorities.

116. The creation of MAPI was contested by notables from the Hema community, G5 and by some Zaïre combatants, who challenged the representativeness of the new movement.<sup>140</sup> They warned that MAPI did not represent the interests of the Hema community and considered MAPI to be a manipulative initiative of the provincial governor, General Luboya Johny Kashama, and MONUSCO, with the intention of weakening Zaïre.<sup>141</sup> As a result, threats were levelled against the Governor and MONUSCO staff, who were accused of being involved in the creation of MAPI, and violence erupted between members of MAPI and Zaïre.

117. Several sources stated that, despite the creation of MAPI, Zaïre remained structured around four factions, namely Zaïre-K, Zaïre-Malayika, Zaïre-Mazembe and Zaïre-Djamaïque. Each faction operated in specific areas (see annex 63). All those factions continued to perpetrate attacks against FARDC, CODECO and civilians.

## **C. Split of the Front patriotique et intégrationniste du Congo**

118. Since December 2022, FPIC has been embroiled in internal disputes that have resulted in a split within the armed group. Tensions arose when the leadership of FPIC forced its military commander, "General" Songambebe Selyabo, to step down; Tondabo Erabo (also known as "General" Herode) was to become the new commander of the armed group.<sup>142</sup> The discord led to armed confrontations between "General" Songambebe and "General" Herode's combatants. While "General" Herode established his headquarters in Nyakunde, "General" Songambebe retreated to Mwenga, Sulasula.

119. During the investigations conducted by the Group of Experts in Marabo and Nyakunde, the latter being the headquarters of "General" Herode's faction, several sources informed the Group that the new leader had considerably reduced the influence of "General" Songambebe's faction, as most FPIC combatants had joined "General" Herode.

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<sup>138</sup> See also [S/2022/479](#), paras. 101 and 102.

<sup>139</sup> Researchers, Zaïre combatants, FARDC, civil society and MONUSCO sources.

<sup>140</sup> Zaïre combatants, local authorities, researchers and civil society and MONUSCO sources.

<sup>141</sup> This refers to an initiative of MONUSCO and the provincial government to hold intercommunal dialogue.

<sup>142</sup> FPIC combatants and security and civil society sources.

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120. In a communiqué issued by “General” Herode, he named his faction “FPIC/Chambre noire-sanduku”.<sup>143</sup> In a subsequent letter to government officials and local chiefs, “General” Herode called for the restoration of State authority, including the return of FARDC, Congolese National Police and local chiefs (see annex 64). FARDC, Congolese National Police and local chiefs confirmed to the Group of Experts that they were again allowed and able to operate in areas under FPIC control. They also acknowledged the retreat of combatants that had previously roamed the city, harassing civilians and imposing taxes.

121. On 28 March 2023, “General” Herode convened a meeting in Nyakunde to finalize a reconciliation agreement with the local community. In a communiqué, FPIC reiterated its unity, its commitment to end hostilities, to work with the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and to adhere to the Disarmament, Demobilization, Community Recovery and Stabilization Programme (see annex 65).

122. “General” Songambe denounced the FPIC/Chambre noire-sanduku faction, which he labelled “a terrorist armed group” in a communiqué, and invited the Congolese authorities, MONUSCO and officials of the Disarmament, Demobilization, Community Recovery and Stabilization Programme to disregard its leaders (see annex 66).

123. At the time of drafting the present report, the Group of Experts had not observed any disarmament or demobilization initiatives by the new FPIC leaders. Sources believed that “General” Herode had carried out a propaganda campaign to consolidate his own legitimacy.

#### **D. Attacks on civilians by Coopérative pour le développement du Congo/Union des révolutionnaires pour la défense du peuple congolais and Zaïre/Mouvement d’autodéfense populaire de l’Ituri militias**

124. CODECO/URDPC continued attacking civilians, even while its leaders attended the third Nairobi conclave, held in November and December 2022 (see paras. 104 and 109 above). Zaïre was not represented in Nairobi. Commitments made with regard to peace or demobilization did not hold, as almost daily attacks and killings were reported as of the time of writing the present report.

125. Since early December 2022, the Group of Experts has documented a substantial increase in violent attacks on civilians by CODECO/URDPC, ostensibly in reprisal for similar, albeit much less frequent, attacks by Zaïre.<sup>144</sup> As in the past, CODECO/URDPC retaliated on a much larger scale than did Zaïre (S/2018/531, paras. 162 and 163).

126. Retaliatory attacks by Zaïre (see annex 67) and CODECO/URDPC mainly targeted villages and civilians from rival communities, including a disproportionate number of women and children, in a spate of indiscriminate killings and kidnappings, frequently coupled with the pillaging and destruction of civilian property and infrastructure, including schools and hospitals. Over 300 civilians were killed in attacks documented by the Group of Experts between mid-November 2022

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<sup>143</sup> Video on file with the Group of Experts.

<sup>144</sup> Based on over 40 interviews conducted with members of civil society, victims, members of armed groups, local community leaders, researchers, international and other NGOs, civil and military authorities, intelligence and MONUSCO sources, and on photographic and documentary evidence.

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and early April 2023. The upsurge in violence reflected growing tensions between the Lendu and Hema communities.<sup>145</sup>

127. The pattern of tit-for-tat attacks extended beyond Djugu territory into the territory of Mahagi, which has previously been less affected by armed group activity, pitting the Zaïre-affiliated Alur against the Lendu in the Walendu-Watsi *chefferie* (see annex 68). The RN27 road linking Bunia with Mahagi territory remained largely under CODECO/URDPC control, with systematic ambushes and killings severely hampering civilian traffic, including commerce, along this crucial axis.<sup>146</sup>

128. Other than under the guise of retaliation, CODECO/URDPC also conducted large-scale and coordinated attacks on villages in Djugu territory, systematically targeting civilians from the Hema or Alur communities. On 8 January 2023, a well-coordinated attack on the localities of Blukwa, Largu and Drodro left more than 23 civilians dead.<sup>147</sup> On 13 January 2023, CODECO/URDPC killed at least 49 civilians, including women, in the predominantly Hema villages of Nyamamba and Mbogi, on the shores of Lake Albert. The attackers conducted a door-to-door search targeting civilians, tying the hands of some to prevent them from fleeing before executing them.<sup>148</sup> Five women, including one who was eight months pregnant at the time, were abducted<sup>149</sup> and allegedly kept as sex slaves in a CODECO/URDPC camp at Salimboko.<sup>150</sup> A detailed presentation of evidence on these attacks is contained in annex 69.

## V. South Kivu

### A. Armed group confrontations and attacks

129. In the Hauts Plateaux of Mwenga, Fizi and Uvira territories, Mai-Mai armed groups and Twirwaneho continued to clash and engage in retaliatory attacks, killing civilians, looting cattle and destroying property (S/2022/479, paras. 152–161). While they mostly targeted the opposing communities, those armed groups also attacked civilians of their own communities, in particular in the case of Twirwaneho, which continued conducting executions of those perceived as not supporting it (see annex 70).<sup>151</sup>

130. Most of the incidents were reported to have occurred around Bijombo, Karegerege, Mikenge, Minembwe., and Rugezi. In particular, since late 2022, Twirwaneho had regularly attacked the Bafuliro, Babembe and Banyindu populations in Rugezi, where they targeted the internally displaced person camp and looted and burned several houses and the local hospital (see annex 71).<sup>152</sup> In mid-March 2023, Twirwaneho simultaneously attacked Musika and surrounding villages, clashing with the Forces armées “Biloze Bishambuke” (FABB) and killing a dozen civilians, including children.<sup>153</sup> After the attacks, Mai-Mai combatants, in particular

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<sup>145</sup> Ibid.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid.

<sup>147</sup> Witnesses, photographic evidence, researchers, and FARDC, MONUSCO and civil society sources.

<sup>148</sup> Photographic and video evidence examined by the Group of Experts and corroborated by eyewitness testimony depicts several bodies of victims, including women, with their hands tied behind their backs, some showing signs of severe mutilation.

<sup>149</sup> Witness testimony of two survivors of the attack and civil society and FARDC sources.

<sup>150</sup> According to a direct relative of one of the women kidnapped.

<sup>151</sup> Ex-Twirwaneho combatant, researchers, and FARDC, security, intelligence, civil society and MONUSCO sources.

<sup>152</sup> FARDC sources, researchers and intelligence, civil society and MONUSCO sources.

<sup>153</sup> Researchers and MONUSCO sources.

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those of FABB, retaliated with incidents of cattle rustling and ambushes against Banyamulenge civilians, which, in turn, led to sustained clashes with Twirwaneho. Twirwaneho and FABB also regularly clashed over control of the nearby Bigaragara mine.<sup>154</sup>

131. Since October 2022, Twirwaneho has increased its attacks on FARDC and regularly clashed with it<sup>155</sup> following reinforcements in the form of recruitment and armaments and the expansion of the Twirwaneho area of operations.<sup>156</sup>

132. FABB and Mai-Mai Yakutumba and their allied group Mai-Mai Apa Na Pale also remained active in Fizi territory, in particular in Mutambala and Ngandja sectors, notably around Misisi and the various mining sites in the area (S/2022/479, paras. 180–189).<sup>157</sup> The armed groups kidnapped and attacked civilians and humanitarian actors and targeted mining sites for their control.<sup>158</sup> Clashes concerning the control of mines at the border between Fizi and Kalemie were reported between allied groups Mai-Mai Yakutumba and FABB at the end of 2022.<sup>159</sup>

## **B. Conseil national pour le renouveau et la démocratie: split and activity**

133. Following months of internal tensions, Conseil national pour le renouveau et la démocratie-Forces de Libération Nationale (CNRD-FLN) split at the end of 2022, a period which coincided with increased activity and communication by the group (see annex 72).

## **C. Joint operations of the Burundi National Defence Force and the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo**

134. The deployment of Burundian armed forces in South Kivu continued (S/2022/967, paras. 102–107), with several troop reinforcements<sup>160</sup> and a further expansion of the area of the operations being conducted jointly with FARDC.<sup>161</sup> This again led to alliances and cooperation between armed groups to either support or fight the coalition of the Burundi National Defence Force (Force de défense nationale du Burundi, FDNB) and FARDC (S/2022/967, paras. 106 and 107). It also triggered movements by armed group to avoid being targeted. In certain areas where these groups were redeployed, such as in Itwombe sector, there was an increase in the number of reported incidents, including cases of kidnapping and killing of civilians, lootings and ambushes against the security forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.<sup>162</sup>

135. FDNB continued to progress south in pursuit of Résistance pour un État de droit au Burundi (RED Tabara) and the Forces nationales de libération (FNL), although the latter was the only group attacked. FDNB-FARDC clashed with FNL,

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<sup>154</sup> FARDC, intelligence, civil society and MONUSCO sources, and researchers.

<sup>155</sup> Since 2019, MONUSCO has documented over 60 attacks against FARDC by Twirwaneho.

<sup>156</sup> FARDC sources, researchers and security, intelligence, civil society and MONUSCO sources.

<sup>157</sup> Researcher, and civil society and MONUSCO sources.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid.

<sup>159</sup> FARDC, intelligence and MONUSCO sources.

<sup>160</sup> On 4 March 2023, additional FDNB troops were deployed to North Kivu under the East African Community Regional Force agreement.

<sup>161</sup> Researchers and FARDC, civil society and MONUSCO sources.

<sup>162</sup> Researchers and FARDC, civil society, MONUSCO and intelligence sources.



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between January and March 2023, in Itombwe sector, Mwenga territory.<sup>163</sup> After the most recent clash in late March, FNL elements led by Aloys Nzabampema moved south towards Lulenge sector, closer to RED Tabara positions.<sup>164</sup>

136. While moving south, in December 2022 and January 2023, the FDNB-FARDC coalition temporarily gained control over several Twirwaneho positions, notably its headquarters in Bijabo, without any fighting, as Twirwaneho had vacated them pre-emptively. Weeks later, Twirwaneho returned to some of those areas, in particular Kihamba, close to Bijabo.<sup>165</sup>

137. In early January 2023, some FDNB troops arrived in Minembwe, as several RED Tabara positions were reported nearby, in particular around Rugezi (south of Minembwe, Fizi territory).<sup>166</sup> Their arrival caused panic among the Banyamulenge population, which temporarily fled the area, and triggered a defensive posture by Twirwaneho, which reinforced its troops and positions around town and increased forced recruitment (see paras. 150–156 below).<sup>167</sup>

138. Alliances or cooperation among armed groups continued to be reported (S/2022/967, paras. 106 and 107), with the aim of fighting the FDNB-FARDC coalition or, on the contrary, collaborating with it against RED Tabara and/or Twirwaneho and M23.<sup>168</sup> In particular, since late 2022, CNRD and other Mai-Mai groups, such as Mai-Mai Kapapa and Mai-Mai Kijangala,<sup>169</sup> have held several meetings to coordinate activities and collaboration with FDNB-FARDC and Gumino against RED Tabara.<sup>170</sup> More generally, it appears that many Mai-Mai groups sided with the FDNB-FARDC coalition as a way of self-preservation.

139. FNL and RED Tabara, on the other hand, grew closer owing to the military pressure against them.<sup>171</sup> Multiple sources continued to report an alliance between Twirwaneho and RED Tabara (S/2022/967, para. 107),<sup>172</sup> with both groups reportedly being supported by Rwanda<sup>173</sup> and possibly also collaborating with M23 (see paras. 142–145 below).<sup>174</sup>

140. In addition, another Mai-Mai coalition was renewed at the end of January 2023 during meetings held in Fizi territory,<sup>175</sup> notably spearheaded by Emo ya M'Mbondo.<sup>176</sup> Similar to the one mentioned in the report of the Group of Experts dated June 2021 (S/2021/560, paras. 138–140), this coalition was led by Yakutumba,

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<sup>163</sup> Intelligence, researchers and civil society sources.

<sup>164</sup> Researchers and security and MONUSCO sources.

<sup>165</sup> Ibid.

<sup>166</sup> Armed group leader, FARDC and MONUSCO sources. Although, since March 2023, some RED Tabara combatants have returned to Masango where they re-established a position.

<sup>167</sup> Source close to Twirwaneho, researchers and FARDC, intelligence, civil society and MONUSCO sources.

<sup>168</sup> Source close to Mai-Mai groups, researchers and FARDC, security, intelligence, civil society and MONUSCO sources.

<sup>169</sup> Kijangala, however, surrendered in April 2023, but his deputy continued in the alliance led by Kapapa.

<sup>170</sup> Sources close to Mai-Mai groups and intelligence, civil society and MONUSCO sources.

<sup>171</sup> Researcher and security, intelligence, civil society and MONUSCO sources.

<sup>172</sup> Sources close to Twirwaneho and Mai-Mai groups and FARDC, security, intelligence and MONUSCO sources.

<sup>173</sup> It appeared, however, that RED Tabara might be divided on the rapprochement with Rwanda.

<sup>174</sup> Sources close to Twirwaneho and Mai-Mai groups and FARDC, security, intelligence and MONUSCO sources.

<sup>175</sup> Source close to Mai-Mai groups and researchers, civil society and MONUSCO sources.

<sup>176</sup> Researchers and MONUSCO sources. Emo ya M'Mbondo is a grouping (*mutualité*) of the Babembe diaspora, with branches in several countries, including the United States. The Group of Experts has reported previously about its role in supporting Mai-Mai groups in South Kivu (see S/2022/479, annex 82).

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Ebuela, Alida and René and it included FABB. It was aimed, inter alia, at countering FDNB-FARDC operations, as well as at launching operations against Minembwe town and fighting M23 in North Kivu.

#### **D. Impact of the crisis related to the Mouvement du 23 mars on South Kivu**

141. Several armed groups operating in South Kivu, including Mai-Mai Yakutumba, expressed their willingness to fight M23. They mobilized some of their elements either to reach North Kivu or to prevent M23 from entering South Kivu, as outlined in annex 73.

#### **E. Links between Twirwaneho and the Mouvement du 23 mars**

##### **Rapprochement**

142. As in 2012, M23 launched attempts to win allies in South Kivu, in particular Twirwaneho and RED Tabara, but also other armed groups (see annex 74), with the objective of opening a second front in South Kivu (see also [S/2012/843](#), paras. 69–81).<sup>177</sup> Several individuals played a key role in facilitating the rapprochement.

143. Charles Sematama, a former aide-de-camp of Laurent Nkunda and a FARDC deserter who joined Twirwaneho in February 2021 (see also [S/2021/560](#), para. 142 and [S/2022/479](#), para. 156), was the principal liaison with Sultani Makenga (see para. 50 above).<sup>178</sup> Sematama notably used his close relative Saint-Cadet Ruvuzangoma (see para. 154 below) to coordinate the rapprochement. Initially, Makanika remained sceptical of Twirwaneho support to M23, owing in particular to the lack of support of the wider Banyamulenge community for M23 and Rwanda.<sup>179</sup> This created tensions within the leadership of Twirwaneho.

144. After his participation in the Nairobi talks, in November 2022, Saint-Cadet,<sup>180</sup> together with a prominent member of the Mahoro Peace Association, Dr. Lazare Sebitereko, led a campaign encouraging the Banyamulenge community in Nairobi to financially support M23 and encouraged Banyamulenge youth to join the ranks of Twirwaneho (see paras. 150–156 below).<sup>181</sup> In mid-January 2023, Saint-Cadet, accompanied by Willy Munezero and Jules Rutebuka, met with M23 leaders in Bunagana.<sup>182</sup>

145. Multiple sources reported that Colonel Moïse Byinshi Gakunzi, a Munyamulenge FARDC deserter, joined M23, in March 2023, to support the opening of a second M23 front in Kalehe, South Kivu.<sup>183</sup> RDF General Vincent Nyakarundi (see para. 61 above) was also cited as having participated in the sensitization of armed groups in South Kivu to support M23.<sup>184</sup>

##### **Recruitment**

146. Since late 2021, recruitment campaigns directed at Banyamulenge youth living in Burundi, Kenya and Uganda had been launched. Young recruits were sent to M23

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<sup>177</sup> Researcher and security, intelligence, Banyamulenge, civil society and MONUSCO sources.

<sup>178</sup> FARDC, Banyamulenge, civil society and MONUSCO sources.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid.

<sup>180</sup> Researchers and security, FARDC, civil society and MONUSCO sources.

<sup>181</sup> Self-defence leader, and civil society, security, Banyamulenge and MONUSCO sources.

<sup>182</sup> Munyamulenge source and FARDC, security, civil society and MONUSCO sources.

<sup>183</sup> Munyamulenge source, researchers and civil society, intelligence and MONUSCO sources.

<sup>184</sup> Researchers and FARDC, civil society and MONUSCO sources.

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camps (see paras. 50 and 51 above) through the border towns of Kisoro and Bunagana, both in Uganda (see also [S/2022/479](#), para. 67).<sup>185</sup>

147. At least 80 Banyamulenge were recruited in Kenya and sent to M23.<sup>186</sup> Several Banyamulenge M23 ex-combatants, Banyamulenge community leaders and civil society in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Kenya, as well as Banyamulenge young people, reported that the majority of the Banyamulenge youth had been deceived and diverted to M23 instead of Twirwaneho.<sup>187</sup>

148. The Group of Experts collected evidence of several structures representing Banyamulenge interests in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the wider region having been involved in the regional recruitment mechanism. Multiple sources reported that individuals involved in, and local cells of, Mahoro Peace Association provided financial support to this recruitment mechanism, including Willy Munezero and Jean-Luc Muvura in Kenya.<sup>188</sup>

149. The Group of Experts documented that M23 executed at least eight Banyamulenge, recruited in Kenya and Uganda, when they tried to escape from the armed group.<sup>189</sup> Several Banyamulenge recruits were also killed during fighting between M23 and FARDC.

## **F. Recruitment and use of children: the case of Twirwaneho**

150. Most armed groups active in South Kivu used children under 18 years of age to participate actively in hostilities or in other auxiliary roles, in violation of the sanctions regime. The Group of Experts documented the presence of children among various Mai-Mai groups as well as in Gumino and Twirwaneho ([S/2021/560](#), para. 151). The Disarmament, Demobilization, Community Recovery and Stabilization Programme resulted in the demobilization of a significant number of children, and many groups committed to releasing minors, with the marked exception of the Twirwaneho and Gumino groups, which opposed the process and continued denying the existence of children in their ranks.<sup>190</sup>

151. Twirwaneho, under the leadership of Makanika, continued to recruit massively,<sup>191</sup> including children as young as 12 years of age.<sup>192</sup> Children were utilized to guard positions, carry out patrols, gather intelligence, participate in combat operations, act as personal escorts or work as domestic aids in military camps. Senior officers, including Makanika, Charles Sematama, Freddy Rushombo, Kamasa and Gakunzi, have used minors aged 14 to 15 years old, including as armed escorts.<sup>193</sup> The new combatants, including minors, continued to be recruited locally,

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<sup>185</sup> Twirwaneho ex-combatants, Banyamulenge source, and intelligence, civil society and MONUSCO sources.

<sup>186</sup> Banyamulenge, FARDC, MONUSCO and civil society sources.

<sup>187</sup> Twirwaneho and M23 ex-combatants, and Banyamulenge, civil society and MONUSCO sources.

<sup>188</sup> Civil society, Banyamulenge, security and MONUSCO sources.

<sup>189</sup> Twirwaneho and M23 ex-combatants, Banyamulenge community members and MONUSCO sources.

<sup>190</sup> Researchers, government source, ex-Twirwaneho combatant and civil society and MONUSCO sources.

<sup>191</sup> The use of children as personal escorts by Michel Rukunda (alias Makanika) was already documented by the Group of Experts in 2010, when he served as deputy commander of the Forces républicaines fédéralistes ([S/2010/596](#), paras. 131 and 132), and in 2011, when he was FARDC Deputy Commander of Operation Amani Leo South Kivu ([S/2011/738](#), paras. 655 and 656).

<sup>192</sup> Researchers, NGOs, and civil society, FARDC and MONUSCO sources.

<sup>193</sup> Researchers, civil society, Twirwaneho ex-combatant, statements of former child soldiers and MONUSCO sources.

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nationally and regionally, including by force, almost exclusively within the Banyamulenge community<sup>194</sup> (S/2021/560, paras. 133–137, 141 and 142).

152. Twirwaneho continued to rely on armed civilians living in villages, acting as a reserve force to be mobilized when needed to defend against attacks or to conduct offensive operations (see also S/2021/560, para. 136).<sup>195</sup> During a visit by the Group of Experts to Minembwe, in March 2023, local notables, civil society leaders and representatives of the community openly admitted that, in case of threat, everyone in the community, including women and schoolchildren,<sup>196</sup> participated in combat.

153. Multiple sources reported that a mass recruitment and training campaign was carried out during the summer of 2022. Schoolchildren from 12 years of age, teachers and pastors were conscripted and underwent mandatory military training that lasted at least a month, during school holidays.<sup>197</sup> The majority of recruits were trained at a camp in Bijabo forest, and Makanika himself was among the trainers.<sup>198</sup> Thereafter, some children remained in the military camps, while others returned to their villages and were given weapons and tasked to be part of a reserve force.<sup>199</sup> Demobilized children reported having to conduct patrols at night.<sup>200</sup>

154. Saint Cadet Ruvuzangoma, president of Minembwe civil society and active Twirwaneho member (S/2022/967, para. 109), confirmed during an interview with the Group of Experts that, in Minembwe, all the Banyamulenge young people do “rounds” to patrol around the villages and that the “inexperienced ones”, including “pupils” (*élèves*) who did not know how to handle a weapon, all underwent training during the summer of 2022 to “face the attacks well”.

155. While some recruits joined Twirwaneho voluntarily, forced recruitment remained prevalent. Many civilians were killed or punished for refusing to join or send their children (see annex 75).<sup>201</sup>

156. Twirwaneho and some local leaders remained fiercely opposed to demobilization.<sup>202</sup> They threatened to attack MONUSCO’s base and assets in Minembwe if the demobilization process through MONUSCO continued.<sup>203</sup> Following the killing of a peacekeeper in Minembwe on 30 September 2022 (S/2022/967, paras. 108–110), the number of demobilizations facilitated by MONUSCO dropped drastically,<sup>204</sup> and another organization working in demobilization suspended its activities in the area.

## G. Twirwaneho financing

157. The investigations conducted by the Group of Experts revealed that Twirwaneho continued to support its operations by drawing upon a combined model of local taxation and diaspora funding (see also S/2022/479, annex. 82). Support to Twirwaneho, which is responsible for killings, the recruitment of children and

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<sup>194</sup> Researchers and civil society, FARDC, government and MONUSCO sources.

<sup>195</sup> Researchers, civil society sources, Twirwaneho ex-combatant and MONUSCO sources.

<sup>196</sup> They specified that it was only children attending secondary school, not children from elementary school.

<sup>197</sup> Researcher, testimonies of demobilized children and MONUSCO sources. Several sources reported that the training was conducted in several rotations.

<sup>198</sup> Civil society and MONUSCO sources, researcher and testimonies of demobilized children.

<sup>199</sup> Researcher and civil society, former child soldiers and MONUSCO sources.

<sup>200</sup> Also civil society and MONUSCO sources.

<sup>201</sup> NGOs, researchers, Twirwaneho ex-combatant, and FARDC and MONUSCO sources.

<sup>202</sup> Researcher, civil society sources, Twirwaneho ex-combatant and MONUSCO sources.

<sup>203</sup> FARDC, civil society and MONUSCO sources.

<sup>204</sup> MONUSCO statistics.

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attacks on United Nations personnel (see paras. 150–156 above and [S/2022/967](#), paras. 108–113), constitutes a violation of the sanctions regime.

### **Local taxation**

158. A taxation system imposed on members of the Banyamulenge community living in areas controlled by Twirwaneho constituted the primary source of local funding for the armed group. Beyond the Banyamulenge community, other persons were also forced to pay Twirwaneho to avoid reprisals.<sup>205</sup>

159. The investigations conducted by the Group of Experts revealed a monthly taxation scheme; for example, police officers, traders and motorbike drivers were each required to pay \$10, while teachers paid 10,000 francs congolais. A teacher based in the Bijombo grouping said that he and his colleagues were required to pay that amount to special tax collection agents belonging to a Twirwaneho committee.

160. Minembwe-based sources and sources familiar with Twirwaneho also informed the Group of Experts that local financial institutions were complicit in implementing the taxation scheme. For example, two teachers who received their salaries through local banks reported that the tax was deducted directly by their banks.

161. Twirwaneho commander Charles Gikwerere (see [S/2021/560](#), annex 95) was cited as being key to local Twirwaneho financing, managing, within the group's leadership structure, all money collected through the illegal taxes.<sup>206</sup>

### **Key diaspora support**

162. Alongside local taxation in Twirwaneho-controlled areas, there was significant financial support from the diaspora. Sources from the Banyamulenge community in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and abroad, former Twirwaneho members, researchers, other armed group members operating in Fizi territory and security services confirmed that the primary sources of financing of Twirwaneho were Banyamulenge diaspora in the region and in the United States. Several combatants who left the armed group in March 2023 told the Group of Experts that their superiors in Twirwaneho had frequently referenced this funding stream, advising them to work hard so as to honour the funding provided by the diaspora.

163. The Group of Experts also collected evidence of senior community leaders in the United States-based diaspora publicly urging members of the community to provide financial support to Twirwaneho. For example, during a memorial ceremony in the United States for a deceased Twirwaneho commander, Bonheur Sekunzi Muragwa,<sup>207</sup> three community leaders linked to the Mahoro Peace Association<sup>208</sup> expressed their support to Twirwaneho; one of them requested the audience to increase their monthly contributions of \$20 in order to support people like Bonheur who “go into battle without shoes or food”.<sup>209</sup> Another community leader threatened that those who did not contribute would not be recognized as part of the community (see annex 76).

### **Mahoro Peace Association**

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<sup>205</sup> Ex-Twirwaneho combatant and Minembwe community leaders.

<sup>206</sup> Ex-Twirwaneho combatant, researchers, teachers, other individuals from Minembwe and MONUSCO sources.

<sup>207</sup> Ex-Twirwaneho leader who died in prison in Kinshasa.

<sup>208</sup> Banyamulenge community leaders in the United States and MONUSCO sources.

<sup>209</sup> Several sources told the Group of Experts that the standard monthly contribution collected by the Mahoro Peace Association in the United States was \$20.

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164. The Mahoro Peace Association, founded by Banyamulenge in the United States, is one of the largest Banyamulenge community associations globally. Several community leaders left the Mahoro Peace Association to set up another association called Banyamulenge Mutuality-Unity. They told the Group of Experts that their decision had been a consequence of the fact that the leadership of the Mahoro Peace Association provided support to Twirwaneho only and not to Gumino also. They also rejected the rapprochement between Twirwaneho, the Mahoro Peace Association and Rwanda (see para. 143 above).

165. Several sources explained that contributions from the diaspora, including the Mahoro Peace Association, began when Twirwaneho operated as a self-defence group (S/2021/560, para. 133), but that contributions had increased under Makanika's leadership.<sup>210</sup> According to these sources, the more military conquests the fighters made, the more funding they received.

166. The Mahoro Peace Association did not provide all details of money transfers made to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region to the Group of Experts, but confirmed that it had spent \$384,286 on humanitarian aid in 2022. Based on this amount and on additional information obtained during its investigations, the Group estimated that the Mahoro Peace Association had channelled more than \$1 million into the region since 2020.

167. The Mahoro Peace Association told the Group of Experts that the funds it sent to the region were directed exclusively for humanitarian needs through individuals from the Banyamulenge community in Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya and Rwanda. The Group received evidence that some of those individuals were linked to Twirwaneho, and multiple sources reported that some of the funds were diverted to Twirwaneho.<sup>211</sup>

## **VI. Primera Gold DRC: a new partnership between the United Arab Emirates and the Democratic Republic of the Congo to counter gold smuggling**

168. Following cooperation agreements signed between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the United Arab Emirates in October 2021,<sup>212</sup> Primera Gold DRC was created in December 2022. The company is the result of a public-private joint venture partnership and officially launched its exports of artisanal gold on 13 January 2023. Several sources within the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Primera Gold DRC informed the Group of Experts that the initiative was aimed at combating gold smuggling and promoting fair trade in gold produced in the country, in line with a recommendation of the Group (S/2017/1091, para. 102). From January to March 2023, Primera Gold DRC exported more than 500 kg of artisanal gold, while, in 2022, the total that had officially been exported by the Democratic Republic of the Congo was 42.25 kg, showing that the artisanal gold trade in the country has always been largely underreported and primarily traded through illicit networks (S/2016/466, paras. 123 and 157; and S/2019/469, para. 165).

169. In line with the mandate of the Group of Experts to monitor the trade in gold sourced in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to ensure that it does not finance

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<sup>210</sup> Banyamulenge community and MONUSCO sources.

<sup>211</sup> Banyamulenge community, MONUSCO and civil society sources, former Twirwaneho members and ex-combatants.

<sup>212</sup> The agreements cover several economic aspects, including customs and the promotion and protection of investments in the two countries.

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armed groups and criminal networks, the Group investigated the activities of Primera Gold DRC. The Group held constructive exchanges with all actors involved, including the authorities of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the United Arab Emirates and Primera Gold DRC representatives. The Group concluded that, while Primera Gold DRC could potentially contribute to ensuring that gold exports occur through official channels, a number of challenges could undermine the project.

### **Discontent within the mining community**

170. Multiple sources reported that the decision to create Primera Gold DRC was taken without the involvement of the Minister of Mines, despite such matters falling clearly within her mandate.<sup>213</sup> Three sources with access to information on the matter informed the Group of Experts that the Minister had disapproved of the accord and had thus refused to co-sign the decree governing the company's activities (see annex 77). Additional sources with knowledge of the matter confirmed that the Centre d'Expertise, d'Evaluation et de Certification des substances minérales précieuses et semi-précieuses (CEEC) opposed the issuance of International Conference on the Great Lakes Region certificates for two exports by Primera Gold DRC in January 2023. CEEC questioned the conformity of the exports with Congolese laws and with the requirements established by the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region Regional Certification Mechanism, including that gold must be traded from a validated site and that the supply chain must not be linked to funding armed groups and must not involve child labour. According to sources of the Group of Experts, CEEC did not have all the information to be able to verify compliance with those criteria. However, CEEC lifted its opposition following the intervention of the Presidency of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Sources at the Presidency and Primera Gold DRC, in turn, reported to the Group that the disapproval within the Ministry of Mines also stemmed from the fear of losing financial gains made from gold smuggling.

171. The Group of Experts received information that officials in the Ministry of Mines and in specialized mining services, as well as the Minister herself, had come under pressure to align themselves with the Primera Gold DRC initiative. They feared reprisals from the Presidency of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which had made Primera Gold DRC the cornerstone of its policy initiatives concerning the gold sector.<sup>214</sup>

172. Officials in the Ministry of Mines and in specialized mining services at the national and provincial levels also raised concerns that the arrangement granted to Primera Gold DRC a de facto monopoly in artisanal gold exports from the Democratic Republic of the Congo. This concern was reiterated by South Kivu-based economic actors who had reviewed the ministerial order of 14 March 2023 (see annex 78). They noted that the order required traders to export at least 100 kg per month from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which they observed would have the effect of excluding all other players from the market in favour of Primera Gold DRC.

### **Risk of Primera Gold DRC being used as an official channel to launder illegally mined gold**

173. The Group of Experts met with Primera Gold DRC managers to discuss the company's internal policies so as to ascertain the precise origin of purchased and exported gold. The Group subsequently sent letters regarding the matter to Primera Gold DRC and AuricHub, the Abu Dhabi-based refinery that refines the gold

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<sup>213</sup> Government officials, including senior officials from several ministries and legal experts.

<sup>214</sup> Diplomatic source and senior officials with knowledge of the matter.

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exported by Primera Gold DRC. The Group acknowledges the cooperation of both companies with it. The Group confirmed that the due diligence policy of Primera Gold DRC included the elements required by national and international instruments. However, it noted that implementation in practice, which may raise additional issues, should be monitored.

174. For example, the company relied upon the traceability conducted by the Service d'assistance et d'encadrement de l'exploitation minière artisanale et à petite échelle, which only monitors a limited number of gold mining sites. It is thus highly possible that the supply chain of Primera Gold DRC could be permeated by gold produced from sites which remain under the control of armed groups, including in Fizi territory (S/2022/479, paras. 170–178). Evidence collected already indicated that several of the company's suppliers were sourcing from illegal sites in Fizi and Shabunda territories.<sup>215</sup> The Group of Experts could not confirm whether gold from illegal sites was sold to Primera Gold DRC and intends to engage with the company in further investigating this matter.

175. While the Group of Experts does not have clear evidence of illegal activities being conducted by AuricHub in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, it notes that the refinery has not yet undergone any United Arab Emirates or internationally recognized responsible sourcing audits.

## **VII. Increased cross-border gold smuggling to Burundi**

176. During the period under review, the Group of Experts documented an increase in activity by a criminal network of Burundian and Congolese civilians, economic actors, intermediaries and Burundian uniformed personnel engaged in gold smuggling across the border between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Burundi.

177. Several sources informed the Group of Experts that ongoing tensions between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda (see para. 62 above) had disrupted the Rwandan gold smuggling route,<sup>216</sup> owing to heightened controls by the authorities of the Democratic Republic of the Congo on goods and persons transiting the border.<sup>217</sup> Smugglers, including those linked to armed groups controlling gold production sites in Uvira and Fizi territories, have therefore increasingly diverted the illicit transfer of gold to Burundi, which has already been documented as a transit hub for gold illegally traded from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (S/2016/466, paras. 159–164).

178. The Group of Experts identified a man who was central to the network's activities. He introduced himself with different names, such as Celestin Nduwimana and Gedeon Bigirimana, and various functions, including as a Burundian intelligence officer based in Uvira and as a Burundian police officer seconded to Uvira, where he claimed to be assisting the Burundian contingent of the East African Community Regional Force. The Democratic Republic of the Congo phone number used by Celestin Nduwimana was, however, registered under another name.

179. Numerous sources indicated that Nduwimana was a key interlocutor connecting smugglers in the Democratic Republic of the Congo with buyers in Burundi.<sup>218</sup> The Group of Experts confirmed that, on at least six occasions, between

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<sup>215</sup> Sources familiar with gold activity in Baraka and Bukavu.

<sup>216</sup> Civil society sources, researcher and mining actors.

<sup>217</sup> Ibid.

<sup>218</sup> Security sources, economic actor and individuals familiar with Nduwimana and gold smuggling along the border between Democratic Republic of the Congo and Burundi.



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December 2022 and March 2023,<sup>219</sup> Nduwimana facilitated the transit of gold with a total weight of 11 kg.<sup>220</sup> According to information received, these transactions generated the equivalent of \$455,000.<sup>221</sup>

180. Those six transactions revealed a clear *modus operandi* of the criminal network involved. Nduwimana first approached Uvira-based smugglers to express his interest in the gold market and to promise a lucrative deal in Burundi, guaranteeing their protection by the Burundian authorities once they crossed the border.

181. Gold from the Democratic Republic of the Congo was then laundered through official gold cooperatives in Burundi (see annex 79). Several sources complicit in those transactions told the Group of Experts that Nduwimana also facilitated contacts between smugglers interested in crossing into Burundi and representatives of cooperatives managing mining sites in Burundi. During its investigations, the Group obtained, for example, a handwritten document outlining a fraudulent agreement between the Koribilorwa Twikenure Minyago and Dukorere Hamwe Dusoze Ikiwi cooperatives to buy gold from individuals coming from the Democratic Republic of the Congo.<sup>222</sup> One of the signatories of this document is Noël Nshimirimana. The Group obtained a phone number used by Nshimirimana in his relations with other members of the network and noted that it was registered under another name.

182. According to several mules (transporters) involved in smuggling gold for this criminal network, the gold they transported to Burundi came from mining sites in Misisi or Nyange in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. When crossing the border, they divided the concealed gold between several people to lower the risk of losing everything if they were arrested. However, crossing the border from Uvira, Democratic Republic of the Congo, into Burundi presented few challenges, given lax controls and the absence of scanners or conduct of searches to detect the ore.

183. According to Democratic Republic of the Congo security sources and individuals approached by Nduwimana, the latter reported that he was acting upon the orders of his higher authorities. The Group of Experts was unable to confirm whether Nduwimana conducted operations in an official capacity; however, it collected a body of evidence demonstrating that Nduwimana acted with the blessing of senior officials.

184. Three mules informed the Group of Experts that they had been stopped at two police checkpoints while transporting gold on the road between Bujumbura and Muyinga. However, they had passed without difficulty when the driver mentioned the name of a Burundian general. The mules stated that the Burundian police officers had been informed in advance of their passage. According to three other well-informed sources, Nduwimana facilitated a meeting, in Kamenge district, between individuals involved in the smuggling network and a Burundian national, who introduced himself as General Thierry Habimana. During this meeting, Habimana indicated that he was open to supporting the business. Two other mules reported that when they had been summoned to be searched at Gatumba border post, the search had been aborted after Nduwimana called a Burundian police agent.

185. In a letter to the Group of Experts in April 2023, the Burundian authorities stated that the above-mentioned cooperatives were not involved in gold mining from

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<sup>219</sup> The network exports larger quantities. Nduwimana told several of his partners that he was in contact with individuals in several other regions of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

<sup>220</sup> Individuals involved in the operations with Nduwimana.

<sup>221</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>222</sup> Document on file with the Secretariat.

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the Democratic Republic of the Congo and that the individuals identified by the Group were unknown to them.

## **VIII. Recommendations**

186. The Group of Experts makes the recommendations set out below.

### **Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1533 (2004) concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo**

187. The Group of Experts recommends that the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1533 (2004) concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo:

(a) Encourage all Member States to provide the Group of Experts with unhindered and immediate access to all information they, or private entities registered on their territories, may have regarding the financing and provision of arms and related materiel to armed groups active in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, including in relation to the use of improvised explosive devices by Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) (see paras. 22–28 and 29–39 above);

(b) Encourage Member States to ensure that neither they nor elements under their command provide support of any kind to the Mouvement du 23 mars (M23) or any other armed group (see paras. 54–61 above);

(c) Encourage enterprises active in the mineral supply chain of gold produced in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, notably Primera Gold DRC and AuricHub, to ensure that their sourcing practices are in full compliance with national, regional and international requirements, including the due diligence guidelines adopted by the Security Council in its resolution 1952 (2010) (see paras. 173–175 above);

(d) Encourage the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to work with relevant stakeholders in order to restore, without delay, the integrity of the tin, tantalum and tungsten supply chain, notably in Rubaya, North Kivu Province (see paras. 91–97 above);

### **Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo**

188. The Group of Experts recommends that the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo:

(a) Share information without further delay on, and work with the Group of Experts to resolve, cases concerning financial flows to ADF from Da'esh or individuals and entities linked therewith (see paras. 29–39 above);

(b) Act proactively to seize private arms caches and weaponry belonging to combatants and work with the Group of Experts to trace the origins of seized and recovered weapons and ammunition (see paras. 52, 53 and 95 above);

(c) Investigate and prosecute:

(i) Individuals responsible for serious violations of international humanitarian and human rights law with regard to the violations documented in the present report (see paras. 18–28, 63–70 and 124–128 above);

(ii) Officers of the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (FARDC) who organize and coordinate cooperation between FARDC elements and armed groups, including the transfer of weapons and ammunition from

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official government stocks to armed groups, notably in Rutshuru, Masisi and Nyiragongo territories (see paras. 71–85 above);

(iii) Individuals and entities based in the Democratic Republic of the Congo that contribute to the financing of armed groups, notably ADF and Twirwaneho (see paras. 160 and 167 above);

(d) Take urgent action to prevent and condemn incitement to, and acts of, discrimination, hostility and violence, including exclusionary discourse and rejection of citizenship rights in the context of upcoming elections, in particular against Rwandophone populations (see paras. 98–103 above);

(e) Implement, without delay, the Disarmament, Demobilization, Community Recovery and Stabilization Programme, with a particular focus on the demobilization of children used by armed groups, notably in South Kivu Province (see paras. 150–156 above);

### **Government of Burundi**

189. The Group of Experts recommends that the Government of Burundi investigate and prosecute, as appropriate, entities and individuals, including those mentioned in the present report, involved in fraudulently exporting gold from the Democratic Republic of the Congo to Burundi (see paras. 176–185 above);

### **Mahoro Peace Association**

190. The Group of Experts recommends that the Mahoro Peace Association clarify the nature of its relationship with Twirwaneho to the Group and the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution [1533 \(2004\)](#) and develop a comprehensive mechanism for tracking funds sent to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region (see para. 167 above).