



Mission de l'Organisation des Nations Unies  
pour la Stabilisation en République  
démocratique du Congo

United Nations Organisation Stabilization  
Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo



UNITED NATIONS  
HUMAN RIGHTS  
OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER

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## DRC: UN calls for justice for crimes committed by the M23 and for the repatriation of ex-combatants

**KINSHASA/GENEVA, 9 October 2014:** In a report published today, the United Nations calls for justice for the crimes committed by the *Mouvement du 23 mars* (M23) between April 2012 and November 2013 when the group had an effective control on parts of territories of North Kivu province. Investigations conducted by the United Nations Joint Human Rights Office (UNJHRO)\* in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) revealed that, during that period, serious violations of human rights and of international humanitarian law – which could constitute to international crimes and crimes according to Congolese criminal law - were committed by the M23 in North Kivu province.

"I congratulate the Congolese authorities for the legal proceedings already engaged against some M23 members and I encourage them to continue their efforts to ensure that those responsible for serious violations of human rights and of international humanitarian law are held accountable for their actions without delay. It is essential that the victims receive justice and that an end is put to the cycles of impunity which have undermined efforts to promote peace in the DRC for far too long," said the High Commissioner for Human Rights today, Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein.

More than 116 individuals were victims of the violation of the right to life; 351 individuals were victims of the violation of the right to physical integrity, including 161 who were raped; 296 were victims of the violation of the right to liberty and security of person, including of abduction and forced recruitment and 18 cases of forced labor and 50 cases of the violation of the right to property were also committed by M23 elements, the report said. The total number of victims could be much higher since UNJHRO staff faced various difficulties in their investigations into these human rights violations.

The Special Representative of the Secretary General of the United Nations in the DRC, Martin Kobler, also insisted that the perpetrators of these human rights violations be held accountable for their actions in court, and noted that DRC's new amnesty law would allow numerous members of the M23 to be granted amnesty and return to the DRC. "I call on the Congolese authorities to make preparations to receive M23 ex-combatants under good conditions as soon as possible and to strictly apply the Amnesty Law to ensure that no members of the M23 who are guilty of serious crimes such as genocide, crimes against humanity or war crimes shall be granted amnesty".

### **Note to editors:**

In accordance with its mandate, UNJHRO staff conducted investigations into violations of human rights committed in the province of North Kivu in the DRC by M23 elements, in particular in the territories of Rutshuru and Nyiragongo, parts of which were under the effective control of M23 elements from April 2012 and November 2013.

During the occupation of these areas, UNJHRO staff faced several challenges, including lack of access due to insecurity, to conduct investigations. However, after the defeat of the M23 in November 2013 following fighting with the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (FARDC) supported by MONUSCO, including its Intervention Brigade, investigation teams were deployed in the newly liberated areas and interviewed more than 160 victims and witnesses of human rights violations committed by the M23.

*Peace it!*

The report notes that more than one hundred civilians were killed by the M23, as well as many cases of rape and looting committed by the M23, especially in and around the camp for the displaced in Mugunga and the Katindo military camp. Many civilians, including children, were also forcibly recruited into the ranks of the M23 and forced to attend military and ideological training in military bases established by the M23, where some were subjected to ill-treatment. A system of compulsory taxes to be paid at each roadblock was established by the M23, including in Munigi and Rumangabo. Investigations into alleged human rights violations revealed that some victims were targeted by the M23 for their alleged collaboration with other armed groups and FARDC soldiers, local authorities, religious leaders, or for resisting forced recruitment into the M23.

A total of 13 arrest warrants were issued in 2013 by the Congolese authorities against M23 members, including four international warrants against M23 leaders reportedly located in Rwanda, according to which they are accused of crimes against humanity and war crimes. To date, M23 members have not yet been brought to justice for the crimes they have been accused of, despite commitments by the signatories of the Peace, Security, and Cooperation Framework Agreement for the DRC and the region adopted in February 2014 not to harbor or provide protection to any person accused of war crimes, crimes against humanity, genocide or crimes of aggression, or to any person covered by the system of UN sanctions, as well as to facilitate the administration of justice through judicial cooperation in the region and to end impunity.

**END**

The full report is available here: <http://www.ohchr.org>  
<http://www.monusco.unmissions.org/> or [www.monusco.org](http://www.monusco.org)

*\* The United Nations Joint Human Rights Office, which was established in February 2008, comprises the Human Rights Division of the UN Stabilization Mission in the DRC (MONUSCO) and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in the DRC (OHCHR-DRC).*

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