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ORAL STATEMENT
ITEM 10: Enhanced Interactive Dialogue on the Democratic Republic of the Congo
**DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO (DRC): GRAVE HUMAN RIGHTS CONCERNS AHEAD OF A
CONTROVERSIAL ELECTION**

UN Human Rights Council
Thirty-eight session
18 June – 6 July 2018

Mr. President,

Amnesty International is deeply concerned by the failure by national authorities to hold to account those suspected to be responsible for the grave human rights violations and crimes under international law committed in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)'s Kasai region:

Out of a dozen cases documented by the UN, only two cases have so far been investigated leading to a trial. In one incident, in Mwanza-Lomba, the military court sentenced some low-ranking soldiers without looking into the responsibility of senior officials in their chain of command. In the second case, in Kananga, concerning the murder of the two UN experts, the trial has been suspended since October 2017.

Amnesty International is also concerned by the persistent suppression of the rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly in the context of the election scheduled to take place on 23 December 2018 and the widespread lack of accountability and cycle of impunity.

Amnesty International calls on the Government of the DRC to:

- Ensure that those suspected to be responsible for the serious human rights violations and crimes under international law in the Kasai region are brought to justice in trials that meet international standards of fairness and without recourse to the death penalty;
- Formally lift the impermissible restrictions on peaceful protests and ensure accountability for those suspected to be responsible for the human rights violations, including senior officers who ordered or abetted the use of excessive force;
- Ensure that all individuals, are allowed to freely express themselves before, during and after the election in accordance with the law and international human rights law obligations,
- And finally release without further delay all those detained solely for exercising their human rights.

Given concerns over the lack of genuine accountability efforts at the national level, the gravity of the

crimes as documented by the findings of the team of experts, as well as the fragility of the situation in the Kasai region in the context of the political crisis, Amnesty International calls on this Council to renew the mandate of the team of experts for another year, and furthermore to expand the mandate of the team of experts, or a similar mechanism, to a country-wide mandate to monitor and report on the overall human rights situation in DRC with a view to preventing further abuses and ensuring accountability.

Thank you, Mr. President.