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- CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY -

## ORAL STATEMENT

ITEM 10: Enhanced Interactive Dialogue on oral updates on Democratic Republic of the Congo

UN Human Rights Council

52<sup>nd</sup> session

27 February – 4 April 2023

Mr. President,

We are concerned about the continuation of the human rights violations in the DRC, and the persistent lack of tangible steps to address impunity.

In North Kivu and Ituri provinces, many civilians continue to be killed despite the existence of long-standing military operations and the Luanda and Nairobi peace processes which were supposed to restore security. The Congolese security forces, the East African Community regional force and the UN peacekeepers are failing to protect civilians, and they have been themselves complicit in several human rights violations, often with impunity.

In the province of Nord-Kivu, Rwandan-backed M23 rebels continue to target civilians. In the western provinces of Mai-Ndombe and Kwango, intercommunal violence between the Teke and Yaka communities, which were sparked last year over disputes regarding customary land taxes, have continued to escalate, resulting in further killings and mass displacement.

The humanitarian response to the crisis remains largely underfunded, while the number of attacks on humanitarian actors and other impediments to life-saving assistance have soared in recent months.

The Congolese authorities, MONUSCO and the Regional Force must ensure the effective protection of civilians. All parties to the conflict must allow humanitarian access to conflict-affected communities. The international community should substantially increase funding for humanitarian assistance, including for adequate shelter, clean water, food, health care, and children's education.

The government's recent draft strategy on "transitional justice" may be a positive step, but it should be backed by the political will to effectively investigate and prosecute those most responsible for serious crimes without further delays. Impunity, a main driver of armed conflicts and repeated atrocities, must be addressed. The rights of victims to truth, justice and reparations must be upheld, and measures should be put in place so that what they suffered in the past will never happen again.

Thank you