Security Council

The Situation Concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo

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Introduction

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) is one of Africa's largest and most resource-rich countries: second largest in territory (after Algeria) and fourth largest in population with roughly 115 million people. It also is the scene of the continent's longest and most deadly war, a civil war has continued with few interruptions since 1998, killing roughly six million, displacing tens of millions more, and greatly impeding the country's development. The civil war has drawn neighboring countries into the situation, creating what is sometimes called Africa's world war.

For three decades, its eastern provinces of North Kivu, South Kivu, and Ituri have been among the most violent places on earth. In January 2025, a rebel movement called the March 23 Movement (M23), supported by Rwanda's armed forces, captured Goma and Bukavu, the two largest cities in the east. The fighting that followed killed thousands of civilians in just a few weeks and led one Council member to warn that the region stood on the brink of a full-scale regional war.[1]

Today the situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo remains on the Security Council's agenda. The Security Council has been engaged in DR Congo since it became independent in 1960.

ODUMUCN 50 delegates should approach DR Congo realistically: for the United Nations, this is an intractable quagmire. The UN is a major player in the situation. Millions of Congolese rely on the UN for their safety from attack and humanitarian aid. But the UN cannot resolve it alone.

The result is comparable to the Middle East in its complexity and resistance to settlement. Every step forward has been followed by a setback, and every actor who becomes involved is drawn deeper into the problem.

Background

Three features make this DR Congo situation especially challenging.

[1] UN News, "DR Congo: Rights Chief Warns Crisis Could Worsen, without International Action," 7 February 2025, https://news.un.org/en/story/2025/02/1159896; UNSC. 2025b. "Security Council Strongly Condemns Ongoing Offensives by M23 Rebel Movement in Eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, Unanimously Adopting Resolution 2773 (2025)," SC/16004, 21 February 2025, https://press.un.org/en/2025/sc16004.doc.htm.

First, the conflict is both a civil war and a regional dispute: the Congolese government and Rwanda accuse each other of sheltering and supporting armed groups, and several other neighbors, including Burundi, are now drawn in.[2]

Second, the fighting sits on top of a humanitarian emergency. Nearly fifteen million Congolese need emergency assistance, and in May 2026 the World Health Organization (WHO) declared an outbreak of Ebola in the DRC an international public health emergency; by mid-September it had become the country's worst on record, with more than 3,400 deaths.[3]

Third, the stakes are economic as well as human. The DRC produces roughly seventy percent of the world's cobalt, a metal essential to batteries, and the minerals of the east have attracted the attention of major powers and armed groups alike.[4]

The United Nations is already deeply engaged. The Security Council has adopted a series of resolutions, maintains an arms embargo and sanctions regime, and oversees a large peacekeeping mission, the UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the DRC (MONUSCO), which is authorized to deploy up to 11,500 troops.[5] The Secretary-General has a Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region, and agencies such as the WHO and the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) lead the response to the health and humanitarian crises. Yet peace agreements signed in 2025 have not stopped the fighting, and the Council is divided over how far MONUSCO should go in supporting a ceasefire. Unusually, the DRC itself is an elected member of the Security Council for 2026 and 2027, which gives it a direct voice in the debate.[6]

Solving this crisis would require extraordinary imagination and sustained commitment from the Congolese Government, its neighbors, the great powers, and the United Nations itself. It may not be solvable in the near term at all. Delegates should therefore set a modest but vital goal for this session: alleviation rather than resolution. That means protecting civilians, containing the violence, getting humanitarian and health assistance to those who need it, and keeping the diplomatic processes alive, so that a lasting settlement remains possible if the political will to achieve it emerges. This brief explains how the crisis arose, where it stands, what the United Nations has done, and what delegates might do next.

Roots of the Conflict. The crisis in the east of the DRC cannot be understood without the 1994 genocide in neighboring Rwanda, in which extremists killed hundreds of thousands of Tutsis. Many of the perpetrators fled across the border into what was then Zaire, and some of their descendants became part of an armed group known as the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR), which remains active in eastern DRC today.[7] Rwanda has long

[2] Security Council Report, "Great Lakes Region (DRC)," *October 2026 Monthly Forecast*, 1 October 2026, https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2026-10/great-lakes-region-drc-10.php.

[3] OCHA. 2026b. "Facing a Critical Funding Gap, the Humanitarian Community in DRC Is Forced to Strictly Prioritize Its Response in 2026," ReliefWeb, 28 January 2026, https://reliefweb.int/report/democratic-republic-congo/facing-critical-funding-gap-humanitarian-community-drc-forced-strictly-prioritize-its-response-2026; ECDC. 2026. "WHO Declares Ebola Outbreak in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda a Public Health Emergency of International Concern," 17 May 2026, https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/news-events/who-declares-ebola-outbreak-democratic-republic-congo-and-uganda-public-health; UNSC. 2026a. *Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo*, S/2026/748, 21 September 2026, https://docs.un.org/en/S/2026/748.

[4] bne IntelliNews, "DR Congo–China Agreement Deepens Minerals Ties amid US Supply Chain Push," 30 March 2026, https://new.intellinews.com/articles/dr-congo-china-agreement-deepens-minerals-ties-amid-us-supply-chain-push-434305.

[5] UN News, "Security Council Renews DR Congo Peacekeeping Mission amid Renewed M23 Offensives in the East," 19 December 2025, https://news.un.org/en/story/2025/12/1166643.

[6] Security Council Report, "Great Lakes Region (DRC)," October 2026.

[7] Security Council Report, "Great Lakes Region (DRC)," October 2026. The scale of the genocide is widely documented;

cited the FDLR as a security threat that justifies its involvement in the region, while the Congolese government says Rwanda uses that argument to cover a pursuit of influence and mineral wealth. A rebellion that began in 1998 drew in several African armies, and a ceasefire agreement signed in Lusaka in July 1999 led the Security Council to create a first peacekeeping mission, known as MONUC, later that year.[8] In 2010, the Council renamed the mission MONUSCO to reflect a new emphasis on "stabilization" and the protection of civilians.[9]

The First M23 Rebellion. The M23 first emerged in 2012, when former Congolese army soldiers mutinied and claimed that an earlier peace deal had not been honored. In November 2012, the group occupied Goma, even though UN peacekeepers were present, an episode widely seen as a failure of the mission.[10] In response, the Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 2098 in March 2013, which created a special "Force Intervention Brigade" inside MONUSCO with the unusual authority to carry out offensive operations against armed groups. The M23 was militarily defeated later that year.[11]

Drawdown and Return. The M23 later returned, and in 2023 it became part of a political-military coalition called the Alliance Fleuve Congo (AFC).[12] Meanwhile, the Congolese government, frustrated with the pace of peacekeeping, asked the United Nations to leave. In December 2023, the Council unanimously adopted Resolution 2717, which began a phased withdrawal of MONUSCO starting in South Kivu, and the mission left that province in June 2024.[13] Seven months later, the M23 launched its largest offensive yet.

The 2025 Offensive. In late January 2025, the M23 and Rwandan forces seized Goma, and by mid-February they had taken Bukavu.[14] The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights reported nearly 3,000 people killed and 2,880 wounded in the first two weeks of fighting, adding that the real figures were probably higher.[15] The Human Rights Council held an emergency session on 7 February 2025 and created a fact-finding mission, while a European Parliament resolution cited estimates of 3,000 to 4,000 Rwandan soldiers fighting alongside the M23.[16] Rwanda denies supporting the M23 and says its forces are defending the country against the FDLR.[17] On 21

see UN Security Council, SC/16416 (listing FDLR leaders).
[8] MONUSCO. n.d. "Background of Conflict," reproduced by the Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute, U.S. Army War College, last updated 13 September 2020, https://pksoi.armywarcollege.edu/?p=1652.
[9] MONUSCO. n.d. "Background of Conflict."
[10] RUSI. 2013. "The UN Intervention Brigade: A Force for Change in DR Congo?" 2013, https://rusi.org/explore-our-research/publications/commentary/un-intervention-brigade-force-change-dr-congo.
[11] UNSC. 2013. "'Intervention Brigade' Authorized as Security Council Grants Mandate Renewal for United Nations Mission in Democratic Republic of Congo," SC/10964, 28 March 2013, https://press.un.org/en/2013/sc10964.doc.htm; Huma Malik, "The Fall of the M23: A Renewed Approach to Intervention?" Human Security Centre Policy Brief, 25 February 2014, https://www.hscentre.org/?p=3987.
[12] UNSC. 2026b. "Security Council 1533 Sanctions Committee Adds Six Individuals and Two Entities to Its Sanctions List," SC/16416, 14 July 2026, https://press.un.org/en/2026/sc16416.doc.htm.
[13] UNSC. 2023. "Security Council Adopts Sweeping Resolution 2717 (2023) Outlining Peacekeepers' Gradual, Responsible, Sustainable Withdrawal from Democratic Republic of Congo," SC/15538, 19 December 2023, https://press.un.org/2023/sc15538.doc.htm; Security Council Report, "Democratic Republic of the Congo," *September 2026 Monthly Forecast*, 1 September 2026, https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2026-09/democratic-republic-of-the-congo-35.php.
[14] UNSC. 2025a. Resolution 2773 (2025), S/RES/2773, 21 February 2025, https://docs.un.org/en/S/RES/2773(2025); Permanent Mission of Greece to the United Nations, "Statement at the Security Council Meeting on the Situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo," 28 January 2025, https://greeceforunsc.mfa.gr/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/DRC-UNSC-Meeting-28.01.2025-GREECE-PR-STATEMENT-final-1.pdf.
[15] UN News, "DR Congo: Rights Chief Warns Crisis Could Worsen."
[16] UN News, "DR Congo: Rights Chief Warns Crisis Could Worsen"; EP. 2025. "Resolution on the Escalation of Violence in the Eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo," 2025/2553(RSP), 13 February 2025, https://oeil.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/en/document-summary?id=1804240.
[17] UNSC. 2025b. "Security Council Strongly Condemns Ongoing Offensives by M23 Rebel Movement in Eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, Unanimously Adopting Resolution 2773 (2025)," SC/16004, 21 February 2025,

February, the Security Council responded with Resolution 2773.

Current Situation

Four Overlapping Peace Processes, One Conflict

Table 1. Key developments, January 2025 to December 2026, compiled from UN Security Council documents and Security Council Report.

Date	Development
27 Jan 2025	M23 rebels, backed by Rwanda, capture Goma
14 Feb 2025	M23 takes Bukavu, the capital of South Kivu
21 Feb 2025	Security Council adopts Resolution 2773 (15-0)
27 Jun 2025	Congolese and Rwandan foreign ministers sign a peace agreement
15 Nov 2025	Doha Framework signed by the Congolese government and AFC/M23
4 Dec 2025	Presidents sign the Washington Accords
10 Dec 2025	M23 enters Uvira, on the Burundi border
19 Dec 2025	Resolution 2808 renews MONUSCO until 20 Dec 2026
17 May 2026	WHO declares Ebola outbreak an international health emergency
29 Jun 2026	Resolution 2825 renews the sanctions regime for one year
14 Jul 2026	UN sanctions committee lists AFC leader Corneille Nangaa and others
17-21 Aug 2026	Doha talks in Switzerland produce a negotiation roadmap
29 Sep 2026	Security Council hears that fighting continues despite the accords
20 Dec 2026	MONUSCO mandate expires (renewal decision due)

Security Situation. As of October 2026, fighting between the Congolese army (known by its French acronym, FARDC) and the M23 continues in North Kivu and South Kivu, despite several ceasefires. The Congolese army has intensified its air operations, while the M23 keeps consolidating and expanding the territory it holds.[18] The UN Group of Experts monitoring the arms embargo reported in December 2025 that the M23 was building an alternative government with its own administrative, judicial, tax, and security structures.[19] The head of MONUSCO, James Swan, who took up his post in March 2026, told the Council in June that the situation was "complex, volatile and devastating," with drones, artillery, and heavy weapons putting civilians at greater risk. [20] MONUSCO documented 632 civilian deaths in North Kivu and Ituri between March and June 2026 alone, and another armed group, Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), continues to attack civilians in the northeast.[21] In August 2026, the Congolese government wrote to the Council alleging that more than 300 people were killed in June and July in areas held by Rwandan forces and the M23; Rwanda rejected the claims in a letter of its own.[22] Meanwhile, Burundi, whose forces operate in South Kivu under an arrangement with the Congolese government, and Rwanda are trading accusations of backing opposing sides.[23]

https://press.un.org/en/2025/sc16004.doc.htm.

[18] Security Council Report, "Great Lakes Region (DRC)," October 2026.
[19] Security Council Report, "Democratic Republic of the Congo," *June 2026 Monthly Forecast*, 1 June 2026, https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2026-06/democratic-republic-of-the-congo-34.php.
[20] UN Audiovisual Library, "UN / DRC MONUSCO," UNifeed, 26 June 2026, https://media.un.org/unifeed/en/asset/d359/d3597812; Security Council Report, "Democratic Republic of the Congo: Briefing and Consultations," *What's In Blue*, 25 March 2026, https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/whatsinblue/2026/03/democratic-republic-of-the-congo-briefing-and-consultations-20.php.
[21] "UN Envoy: 632 Civilians Killed in DR Congo since March," Lovguiden, 26 June 2026, https://www.lovguiden.dk/en/det-offentlige/de-forenede-nationer/2026-06-26-fn-udsending-kampe-i-dr-congo-har-kostet-632-civile-livet-siden-marts; UN Audiovisual Library, "UN / DRC MONUSCO," 26 June 2026.
[22] Security Council Report, "Great Lakes Region (DRC)," October 2026.
[23] Security Council Report, "Great Lakes Region (DRC)," October 2026.

The Diplomatic Picture. Unusually, there is not one peace process but several. The first is the *Washington Process*, a United States-led effort that produced a peace agreement between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda on 27 June 2025 and a declaration, the Washington Accords for Peace and Prosperity, signed by the two presidents on 4 December 2025.[24] The second is the *Doha Process*, led by Qatar, between the Congolese government and AFC/M23, which produced a framework agreement in November 2025. Of the eight protocols that the framework envisions, only two have been signed: on ceasefire verification and the release of detainees; the other six, covering humanitarian access, the restoration of state authority, security agreements, the return of displaced people, economic recovery, and justice, remain unfinished.[25] The third is the *African Union-led Mediation*, headed by the President of Togo, Faure Gnassingbé, which has apparently developed a political roadmap.[26] All three have struggled to change events on the ground. The M23 is not a party to the Washington agreements, and within days of the December 2025 signing, the group entered the border town of Uvira, which cuts Congolese forces off from Burundi.[27]

The two main sides also agree on sequencing. The Congolese government signed a protocol with FDLR on 28 July 2026 on disarming and gathering its fighters, which it says fulfills its commitments under the Washington accords. Rwanda calls this a delaying tactic and argues that the Accords require the FDLR to be neutralized, not negotiated with. Rwanda has in turn been asked to lift what the agreements call its "defensive measures," meaning to withdraw its forces from Congolese territory.[28] A seventh meeting of the joint security body created by the Washington Accords took place in Geneva on 16 and 17 September 2026, and a planning conference with the United States is expected in October.[29] Meanwhile, the United States has imposed sanctions on former Congolese President Joseph Kabila, who returned from exile in 2025 and is living in M23-held Goma, for his alleged support of the rebels.[30]

Humanitarian Crisis. The United Nations and the Congolese government appealed for $1.4 billion in January 2026 to help 7.3 million of the nearly 15 million people who need assistance, but the target was reduced because of limited funding. By the end of March, only about thirty percent of the money had arrived.[31] OCHA reported more than 5.7 million internally displaced people in 2026, and about 236,000 people fled to neighboring countries through January 2026, with over half going to Burundi.[32] Ebola, caused by the Bundibugyo strain, for which it is unclear whether existing vaccines work, was declared a Public

[24] USIP. n.d. "Washington Accords for Peace and Prosperity," accessed October 2026, https://www.usip.org/drc-rwanda/; "Full Text of Washington Accords Signed by Kagame, Tshisekedi," *The New Times* (Kigali), 5 December 2025, https://allafrica.com/stories/202512050184.html.
[25] Security Council Report, "Democratic Republic of the Congo," September 2026; *Doha Framework for Peace between the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Congo River Alliance (M23 Movement)*, signed 15 November 2025, African Union, https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/45656-doc-2025.11.15_-_SIGNED_Framework_Peace_Agreement_EN.pdf.
[26] Security Council Report, "Great Lakes Region (DRC)," October 2026.
[27] Gregory Walton, "UN Security Council Votes to Extend DR Congo Mission by One Year," eNCA (AFP), 19 December 2025, https://www.enca.com/news/un-security-council-votes-extend-dr-congo-mission-one-year.
[28] Security Council Report, "Democratic Republic of the Congo," September 2026; Security Council Report, "Great Lakes Region (DRC)," October 2026.
[29] Security Council Report, "Great Lakes Region (DRC)," October 2026.
[30] Security Council Report, "Democratic Republic of the Congo," June 2026.
[31] OCHA. 2026b. "Facing a Critical Funding Gap," 28 January 2026; OCHA. 2026a. "Democratic Republic of the Congo: Humanitarian Dashboard (March 2026)," reproduced by the NYU Institute for Public Policy, 26 May 2026, https://ifp.nyu.edu/2026/grey-literature/democratic-republic-congo-humanitarian-dashboard-march-2026/.
[32] OCHA. 2026a. "Democratic Republic of the Congo: Humanitarian Dashboard (March 2026)"; OCHA. 2026c. "Regional External Update #28: West and Central Africa Region, Eastern DRC Situation," ReliefWeb, 9 January 2026, https://reliefweb.int/report/democratic-republic-congo/regional-external-update-28-west-and-central-africa-region-eastern-drc-situation-9-january-2026.

Health Emergency of International Concern on 17 May 2026. According to the Secretary-General, the outbreak had reached 7,200 confirmed cases and 3,475 deaths by 14 September.[33] Neighboring Uganda has contained its cases, but in the DRC, insecurity continues to hamper health workers.[34]

Leading Actors. The main actors are:

- ***The DR Congolese Government*** of President Félix Tshisekedi, its army, and allied local militias known as Wazalendo.
- ***AFC/M23***, led politically by Corneille Nangaa, and the ***Rwanda Defense Force***, which the Security Council has called on to stop supporting it.
- ***Other armed groups***, including the ***FDLR*** and the ***ADF*.**
- ***Neighboring states***, especially ***Burundi***, ***Rwanda***, and ***Uganda***.
- ***Mediators***, including the ***African Union***, ***Qatar***, and the ***United States***.
- ***International Organizations***, including the ***European Union***, the ***International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR)***, and the ***United Nations***.
- ***Humanitarian Groups***, such as the ***International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)***, ***Médecins Sans Frontières***, and ***UN agencies***.[35]

Role of the United Nations on the Issue

Limited Powers

The United Nations works on this issue through several bodies, each with different powers and limits.

The Security Council. The Council holds regular briefings on the DRC, usually in March, June, September, and December, and France serves as the "penholder," the member that drafts most Council texts on the subject. Its most important recent decisions were all adopted unanimously: Resolution 2773 (February 2025) on the M23 offensive, Resolution 2808 (December 2025) renewing MONUSCO, and Resolution 2825 (June 2026) renewing sanctions.[36] It has also found it harder to agree on lesser documents. In March 2026, France proposed a presidential statement to adjust MONUSCO's posture, but differences over the mission's role, notably objections from China and the Russian Federation, prevented agreement.[37] After a briefing on 29 September 2026, however, members did agree on the "press elements," taking note of the first ceasefire verification missions and thanking MONUSCO for its assistance.[38]

Sanctions. Under a regime first created in 2004, the Council imposes an arms embargo on armed groups in the DRC, along with travel bans and asset freezes, and a Group of Experts investigates violations and reports to the Council. Congolese government forces are exempt from the embargo. On 14 July 2026, the sanctions committee added six individuals and two entities to its list, including the AFC and its leader Corneille

[33] ECDC. 2026. "WHO Declares Ebola Outbreak"; UNSC. n.d. S/2026/748; Security Council Report, "Democratic Republic of the Congo," September 2026.
[34] Security Council Report, "Great Lakes Region (DRC)," October 2026.
[35] Security Council Report, "Democratic Republic of the Congo," September 2026; Security Council Report, "Great Lakes Region (DRC)," October 2026.
[36] UNSC. n.d. SC/16004; UN News, "Security Council Renews DR Congo Peacekeeping Mission"; UNSC. 2026c. "Unanimously Adopting Resolution 2825 (2026), Security Council Extends Sanctions Regime for Democratic Republic of the Congo by One Year," SC/16403, 29 June 2026, https://press.un.org/en/2026/sc16403.doc.htm.
[37] Security Council Report, "Democratic Republic of the Congo," September 2026.
[38] Security Council Report, "Great Lakes Region (DRC)," October 2026.

Nangaa, but also the Twirwaneho armed group and leaders of the FDLR and ADF, showing that the listings were not aimed at one side only.[39] Resolution 2825 now allows sanctions on groups that obstruct MONUSCO's work, and it highlights the link between illegal exploitation of natural resources and the financing of armed groups.[40]

Peacekeeping: MONUSCO. MONUSCO is authorized to use up to 11,500 troops, 600 military observers and staff officers, and over 1,700 police. Its main task is to protect civilians, and its area of operation is limited to North Kivu and Ituri, except that it may support ceasefire monitoring in South Kivu, with notice to the Council, when conditions permit.[41] Between March and June 2026, it supported the voluntary repatriation of 156 former Rwandan fighters and 163 dependents, and it assisted the Ebola response.[42] In late August and September 2026, it supported the first ceasefire verification missions to Minembwe and Masisi, run by the African-led body known as the Expanded Joint Verification Mechanism Plus.[43] The mission is limited by a shortage of UN peacekeeping funds, and China and the Russian Federation insist that only deployment in South Kivu requires prior Council authorization.[44]

The Secretary-General and the Special Envoy. Secretary-General António Guterres reports regularly to the Council, and his Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region, Huang Xia, uses "good offices" to support mediation. The Envoy's mandate is to help implement a 2013 regional agreement, the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework, and he briefs the Council twice a year; the next briefing is in October 2026.[45]

The General Assembly and the Human Rights Council. The General Assembly has not adopted a country-specific resolution on the crisis recently, but its role is real: the Fifth Committee approves MONUSCO's budget, and the Human Rights Council, a subsidiary body of the Assembly, held a special commission of inquiry. In June 2026, the commission warned that civilians in North and South Kivu were "vulnerable and unprotected."[46]

UN Agencies. The WHO leads the Ebola response; OCHA coordinates humanitarian appeals; and the World Food Program and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) feed and shelter displaced people, although food rations in the east were cut by as much as seventy percent in 2025 for lack of funds.[47]

What the United Nations cannot or does not do. The United Nations currently is not a party to the Washington or Doha negotiations and has no power to impose a settlement. Peacekeepers can protect civilians and monitor ceasefires, but they cannot force a state's army, such as Rwanda's, to withdraw, and MONUSCO can operate only with the consent of the host government. Council sanctions require consensus among the five permanent members, and in 2026 the Russian Federation temporarily held up the July listings before lifting its objection.[48]

The General Assembly cannot compel any state to act. Only the Security Council can do that. And the United Nations depends on voluntary funding:

[39] UNSC. n.d. SC/16416.
[40] UNSC. n.d. SC/16403.
[41] UN News, "Security Council Renews DR Congo Peacekeeping Mission"; Security Council Report, "Democratic Republic of the Congo," September 2026.
[42] "UN Envoy: 632 Civilians Killed," Lovguiden; Security Council Report, "Democratic Republic of the Congo: Briefing and Consultations," What's In Blue, 25 June 2026, https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/whatsinblue/2026/06/democratic-republic-of-the-congo-briefing-and-consultations-21.php.
[43] Security Council Report, "Great Lakes Region (DRC)," October 2026.
[44] Security Council Report, "Democratic Republic of the Congo," September 2026; "UN Envoy: 632 Civilians Killed," Lovguiden.
[45] Security Council Report, "Great Lakes Region (DRC)," October 2026.
[46] UN News, "DR Congo: Rights Chief Warns Crisis Could Worsen"; Security Council Report, "Democratic Republic of the Congo," September 2026.
[47] OCHA. 2026b. "Facing a Critical Funding Gap"; Cecilia Ologunagba, "UN, Partners Appeal for $1.4bn to Address Congo's Humanitarian Needs," News Agency of Nigeria, 28 January 2026, https://nannews.ng/un-partners-appeal-for-1-4bn-to-address-congos-humanitarian-needs/.
[48] Security Council Report, "Democratic Republic of the Congo," September 2026.

the 2026 humanitarian plan was only about thirty percent funded by the end of March, and peacekeeping faces a liquidity crisis.[49]

Landmark UN Resolutions

The table below summarizes the most important recent decisions.

Table 2. Selected Security Council resolutions on the DRC. Sources: UN Security Council press releases and documents.

Resolution, date and vote	What it did
2098 28 Mar 2013 Unanimous	Created the Force Intervention Brigade within MONUSCO to carry out offensive operations against armed groups, including the M23.
2717 19 Dec 2023 Unanimous	Began the phased withdrawal of MONUSCO, starting in South Kivu, at the request of the Congolese government.
2773 21 Feb 2025 15-0-0	Condemned the M23 offensive; demanded that the M23 stop fighting and withdraw; called on the Rwanda Defense Force to leave.
2808 19 Dec 2025 15-0-0	Renewed MONUSCO until 20 December 2026; allowed it to support ceasefire monitoring in South Kivu.
2825 29 Jun 2026 15-0-0	Renewed sanctions until 1 July 2027 and the Group of Experts until 1 August 2027; added obstruction of MONUSCO as a listing criterion.

Foundations. The Council created the first UN mission in 1999 (Resolution 1279) and established the sanctions regime in 2004 (Resolution 1533). Resolution 1925 (2010) renamed the mission MONUSCO and gave it priority tasks of protecting civilians and supporting stabilization.[50] Resolution 2098 (2013) introduced the Force Intervention Brigade, which the Council described as an exception that did not set a precedent for peacekeeping.[51] In 2018, in Resolution 2439, the Council addressed an earlier Ebola outbreak in the east, a text that members may use as a model for the present emergency.[52]

Resolution 2773 (2025). Adopted unanimously under Chapter VII of the Charter, which allows binding decisions, Resolution 2773 was the Council's strongest response to the 2025 offensive. It decided that the M23 must cease hostilities, withdraw from the areas it controls, and reverse the creation of illegitimate parallel administrations. It called on the Rwanda Defense Force to stop supporting the M23 and withdraw from Congolese territory without preconditions. It also called on the Congolese government to end any support for armed groups, especially the FDLR, and it reaffirmed the DRC's sovereignty and territorial integrity.[53] In the debate, the representative of France said there was no military solution to the conflict, while the DRC complained that three weeks of Council silence had given Rwandan forces "free rein."[54]

Resolution 2808 (2025). Renewing MONUSCO, this resolution warned of a rapidly worsening security and humanitarian situation in the east, kept the troop ceiling unchanged, and authorized the mission to support a permanent ceasefire, with prior notice to the Council when it deploys in South Kivu. It was adopted 15-0, although, according to the representative of the United States, the negotiations had once again been disrupted by Rwandan and M23 efforts.[55] The mandate expires on 20 December 2026, so the

[49] OCHA. 2026a. "Democratic Republic of the Congo: Humanitarian Dashboard (March 2026)"; "UN Envoy: 632 Civilians Killed," Lovguiden.
[50] MONUSCO. n.d. "Background of Conflict"; UNSC. n.d. SC/16416.
[51] UNSC. n.d. SC/10964.
[52] Security Council Report, "Democratic Republic of the Congo," June 2026.
[53] UNSC. n.d. SC/16004.
[54] UNSC. n.d. SC/16004.
[55] Walton, "UN Security Council Votes to Extend DR Congo Mission"; UNSC. 2025c. "The Situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo," 10075th meeting, S/PV.10075, 19 December 2025, https://transcripts.un.org/en/sc/10075; UN Audiovisual Library, "UN / DRC MONUSCO," UNifeed, 19 December 2025, https://media.un.org/avlibrary/en/asset/d351/d3519613.

Council will soon have to decide whether to renew, narrow, or expand it.

Resolution 2825 (2026). The Council unanimously renewed the sanctions regime in June 2026. Liberia, speaking also for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Somalia, welcomed the reaffirmation that the sanctions do not apply to the Congolese government.[56]

Other bodies. On 7 February 2025, the Human Rights Council adopted a resolution condemning abuses in North and South Kivu, demanding that the Rwanda Defense Force withdraw, and creating a fact-finding mission.[57] The European Parliament, although not a UN body, adopted a resolution on 13 February 2025, by 443 votes to 4 with 48 abstentions, condemning the occupation of Goma and calling for the suspension of a raw-materials agreement with Rwanda.[58]

Countries and Bloc Positions: Competing Interests

African Union. The African Union's Peace and Security Council has backed African-led mediation and in January 2025 mandated a fact-finding mission.[59] Togo's Faure Gnassingbé serves as the AU mediator, and the AU Commission takes part in the Washington and Doha processes.[60] African Union positions are not binding on African states with rotating seats in the Security Council.

China. China supports the territorial integrity of the DRC and argues that the Security Council should back African-led solutions. In February 2025, as Council president, its representative called for African problems to be solved in an African way and urged resolutions that build on regional mediation.[61] China voted for Resolutions 2773, 2808, and 2825 but stresses that MONUSCO should retain its "independence, neutrality and authority," and, together with the Russian Federation, holds that any deployment to South Kivu requires prior approval of the Council.[62] China also has major economic interests: Chinese companies hold large stakes in Congolese cobalt and copper, China is the DRC's largest bilateral creditor, and in March 2026 the two governments signed a mining cooperation agreement, which some observers saw as a response to the United States–DRC partnership.[63]

The European Union (EU) is strongly committed to measures to restore peace and stability in DRC. It's engagement is shaped by the colonial legacy of Belgium, the overwhelming need to suppress migration to Europe, and its commitment to humanitarian assistance and rule of law. The EU support peacekeeping intervention, when combined diplomacy and sanctions.

On 17 March 2025, its Council listed nine individuals and one entity, including M23 leaders, Rwandan military commanders, and a Kigali gold refinery accused of importing gold from M23-held areas.[64] The European Parliament has called for a suspension of the EU–Rwanda raw-materials agreement, and the EU's foreign policy chief, Kaja Kallas, said it would be reviewed.[65] On 28

[56] UNSC. n.d. SC/16403.
[57] UN News, "DR Congo: Rights Chief Warns Crisis Could Worsen."
[58] EP. 2025. "Resolution on the Escalation of Violence."
[59] UNSC. n.d. SC/16004; HRW. 2025. "African Union Needs to Act Now on Eastern DR Congo," 13 February 2025, https://www.hrw.org/news/2025/02/13/african-union-needs-act-now-eastern-dr-congo.
[60] Security Council Report, "Democratic Republic of the Congo," September 2026.
[61] UNSC. n.d. SC/16004.
[62] UN News, "Security Council Renews DR Congo Peacekeeping Mission"; Security Council Report, "Great Lakes Region (DRC)," October 2026.
[63] bne IntelliNews, "DR Congo–China Agreement."
[64] Council of the European Union, Council Implementing Decision (CFSP) 2025/510 of 17 March 2025, Official Journal of the European Union, 17 March 2025, http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec_impl/2025/510/oj; Council of the European Union, "Democratic Republic of the Congo: European Union (EU) Lists Further Nine Individuals and One Entity," March 2025, https://african.business/2025/03/apo-newsfeed/democratic-republic-of-the-congo-european-union-eu-lists-further-nine-individuals-and-one-entity.
[65] EP. 2025. "Resolution on the Escalation of Violence"; "EU to Sanction Rwanda and 'Review' Raw Materials Agreement," The Brussels Times, 24 February 2025,

September 2026, the EU's Council also transposed the United Nations' July listings of Corneille Nangaa, the AFC, and others into its own sanctions regime.[66] The EU and several of its member states belong to the International Contact Group for the Great Lakes, which in December 2025 welcomed the Washington Accords and urged both sides to implement Resolution 2773, and in August 2026 urged Kinshasa to produce a realistic plan to neutralize the FDLR.[67]

Non-Aligned Movement. The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), with 120 members, 53 African, has no single declared position on this crisis. All main African parties to the conflict, the are NAM members, creating serious difficulties for the group.[68] The Movement's founding principles of sovereignty, non-interference, and peaceful settlement of disputes are invoked by both sides: Rwanda cited them at the 2024 NAM ministerial meeting in Kampala, and Uganda chairs the Movement until 2027.[69] Several NAM members on the Security Council have stressed that African-led processes must be supported. Pakistan welcomed regional efforts. Somalia warned that peace does not begin with finger-pointing.[70] Delegates representing NAM members should therefore expect common ground on sovereignty, on African ownership of mediation, and on adequate funding for humanitarian relief.

The Russian Federation sees several opportunities in the DRC conflict for advancing Russia's regional interests and influence. Above all, Russia seeks way to cultivate support for its 'Special Military Operation' in Ukraine by trading support with other Security Council members. African countries have been especially willing to make such deals. More than half of all African states vote in favor of the Russian position in the UN General Assembly.

Russia has voted for every recent resolution and stresses that the Council's resolutions must be implemented in good faith by the parties, especially Resolution 2773, which it describes as a statement of support for the Charter.[71] It asked the Secretariat for detailed proposals on MONUSCO's role in ceasefire monitoring and, with China, insists that conditions must be in place before MONUSCO expands into South Kivu.[72] In 2026, the Russian Federation placed a hold on proposed sanctions listings for several weeks before lifting it.[73]

The United States supports solutions in DRC that maximize investment opportunities for American companies, especially by facilitating purchases of mining sites and real estate development, and especially opportunities for President Trump's family and close friends.

In practice, this means American diplomacy looks for deals with various factors, regardless of their side or history. The United States is the central mediator in the Washington process and a major actor on sanctions and minerals. It sanctioned

https://brusselstimes.com/1458822/eu-to-sanction-rwanda-and-review-raw-materials-agreement.

[66] "EU Transposes UN Congo Sanctions on Nangaa, AFC and Three Others," Lovguiden, 29 September 2026, https://lovguiden.dk/en/det-offentlige/eur-lex-lovgivning/2026-09-29-eu-indfoerer-fns-congo-sanktioner-mod-nangaa-afc-og-tre-oevrige.

[67] German Federal Foreign Office, "International Contact Group for the Great Lakes (ICG) on the Washington Accords for Peace and Prosperity between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Republic of Rwanda signed in Washington on 4 December 2025," press release, 5 December 2025, https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/en/newsroom/news/2747404-2747404; Security Council Report, "Democratic Republic of the Congo," September 2026.

[68] "Kampala Hosts Non-Aligned Movement Summit," The EastAfrican, 15 January 2024, https://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/tea/business/kampala-hosts-non-aligned-movement-summit-4492612.

[69] Kabarebe, James, "Statement by the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs in Charge of Regional Cooperation, 19th Non-Aligned Movement Summit Ministerial Meeting," Kampala, 17 January 2024, Republic of Rwanda Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, https://www.minaffet.gov.rw/fileadmin/user_upload/Minaffet/Publications/Statement_by_MoS_in_NAM__17_01_2024.pdf; "Kampala Hosts Non-Aligned Movement Summit."

[70] UNSC. n.d. SC/16004.

[71] UNSC. n.d. SC/16004.

[72] UN News, "Security Council Renews DR Congo Peacekeeping Mission"; Security Council Report, "Democratic Republic of the Congo," September 2026.

[73] Security Council Report, "Democratic Republic of the Congo," September 2026.

Rwanda's minister of state for regional integration, James Kabarebe, and an M23 spokesperson in February 2025. In April 2026 it sanctioned Joseph Kabila.[74] In December 2025, The US signed a strategic partnership agreement with the DRC covering critical minerals, infrastructure, and governance, and it has said that Rwanda's continued support for the M23 violates the Washington Accords.[75] The US supports MONUSCO's renewal and the Doha process, but it generally refuses to help fund peacekeeping operations.

Some other country positions

Burundi. Burundi hosts about 142,000 newly arrived Congolese refugees, has forces in South Kivu supporting the Congolese army, and, a Burundian military source told AFP, regards an M23 advance on Uvira as a red line.[76]

Democratic Republic of the Congo. The Congolese government demands the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Rwandan forces under Resolution 2773, has pressed for punitive measures against the M23 and Rwanda, and in 2026 has used its Council seat to emphasize the illegal exploitation of natural resources, convening a debate on the subject in July.[77] It signed the FDLR protocol of July 2026 and has sought partners on both sides of the great-power competition for minerals.[78]

Rwanda. Rwanda denies supporting the M23, says it faces a security threat from the FDLR, and argues that any solution must address the grievances of Kinyarwanda-speaking Congolese and Rwanda's own security concerns.[79] It has described the Accords as requiring the FDLR's neutralization before Rwanda withdraws its forces, and it has rejected the Congolese allegations about killings in June and July.[80]

Some Proposals for Action

The 15 Member States of the Security Council are free to choose any path of action—or non-action—that they prefer. As sovereign states, they are not bound by the precedence of past UN resolutions, or even by their own votes. But they are limited by the need for a majority, including the yes votes or abstentions of all five Permanent Members.

The United Nations is already engaged on this issue through the Security Council, MONUSCO, the sanctions regime, the Special Envoy, the Human Rights Council, and humanitarian agencies. The question for delegates is what more it can do, and what it can do better. The following themes may help in writing position papers and draft resolutions:

Renew the MONUSCO mandate. With MONUSCO's mandate due to expire, the Council faces the question of whether to renew it, and if so, for how long and under what conditions? The Council could renew it unchanged, authorize deployment to South Kivu for ceasefire monitoring, or set clear conditions for doing so. Delegates should consider how to respect the Congolese government's consent and China's and the Russian Federation's concerns about prior authorization, while ensuring the mission has sufficient resources and legal clarity to support verification.

[74] UNSC. n.d. SC/16004; Security Council Report, "Democratic Republic of the Congo," June 2026.
[75] IEA. n.d. "DRC-US Strategic Partnership Agreement," Policies Database, https://www.iea.org/policies/29541-drc-us-strategic-partnership-agreement; UN Audiovisual Library, "UN / DRC MONUSCO," 19 December 2025.
[76] OCHA. 2026c. "Regional External Update #28"; "Fighting Erupts in DR Congo a Day after Peace Deal Signed," CTV News (AFP), 28 June 2025, https://www.ctvnews.ca/world/article/fighting-erupts-in-dr-congo-a-day-after-peace-deal-signed/; Security Council Report, "Great Lakes Region (DRC)," October 2026.
[77] UNSC. n.d. SC/16004; Security Council Report, "Democratic Republic of the Congo," June 2026; Security Council Report, "Great Lakes Region (DRC)," October 2026.
[78] Security Council Report, "Democratic Republic of the Congo," September 2026; bne IntelliNews, "DR Congo–China Agreement."
[79] UNSC. n.d. SC/16004.
[80] Security Council Report, "Democratic Republic of the Congo," September 2026; Security Council Report, "Great Lakes Region (DRC)," October 2026.

Bring the peace tracks together. The Washington, Doha, and African Union tracks overlap but are not formally linked. Delegates might propose an informal interactive dialogue in the Council with all mediators, support for the Special Envoy's coordinating role, and a clear timetable for the six unsigned Doha protocols and for the joint commitments on the FDLR and on Rwandan withdrawal. A key issue is sequencing: which steps come first, and how will each be verified?

Strengthen implementation of Resolution 2773 and the sanctions regime. The Council demanded that the M23 and Rwandan forces withdraw, but the demand has not been met. Options include supporting the Group of Experts' access to sites and documents, using the new listing criterion for obstruction of MONUSCO, and examining mineral supply chains so that illegally mined gold and tantalum do not finance armed groups. Delegates may also consider a Council product on natural resources and security, a priority of the DRC, building on earlier resolutions and presidential statements.

Protect civilians and fund the humanitarian response. Member States could address the shortfall in the $1.4 billion humanitarian plan, press all parties to allow humanitarian corridors, and call for protection of health workers during the Ebola emergency, drawing on Resolution 2439 (2018) as a precedent.

Pursue accountability. The commission of inquiry established by the Human Rights Council has documented grave violations by several parties. Delegates might consider how the Council and the Human Rights Council can support credible, independent investigations, and how to protect victims and human rights defenders.

Address root causes. Lasting peace will require the disarmament and return home of the FDLR and other foreign fighters, the reintegration of Congolese combatants, the restoration of state authority, and a political settlement addressing the grievances of Congolese communities in the east.

Make the Democratic Republic of the Congo the co-penholder with France. The documented benefits are procedural, but there are many other benefits. Security Council Report also suggests that France and the United Kingdom may see penholding as a way to keep influence as their relative power has declined. A UK parliamentary committee made the equivalent argument about British penholding.[81]

The penholder drafts, steers negotiations, requests meetings, organizes visiting missions, and speaks first in the chamber and in consultations.[82] The penholder shapes the agenda, timing, and sequencing. Historically, texts were shared with the other permanent members first and with the ten elected members only afterward.[83] Penholders also control deadlines, and mandate expiry dates create pressure to vote.[84] Gifkins (2021) shows that Council influence flows from institutional roles, not just the veto, and the pen is one such role.[85]

On substance, the draft that anchors negotiations starts from French priorities. Additionally, through this mechanism, the DRC would gain more substantial leverage over how peacekeeping is shaped in the region. A shift in power dynamics could create a shift in the paradigm where the DRC becomes a relevant actor in its own destiny, versus being just a passive spectator watching foreign powers divide its land, arm its neighbors,

[81] UK House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee. 2025. *The Write to Protect: Britain's Pen on the World Stage*. Second Report of Session 2024–26, HC 930, 21 September 2025. https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/49593/documents/264116/default/.
[82] Security Council Report. 2026. *The Security Council and the Power of the Pen*. Research Report no. 5, 27 May 2026. https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/penholders_report_2026.pdf.
[83] Security Council Report. 2018. *The Penholder System*. Research Report no. 3, 21 December 2018. https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/research-reports/the-penholder-system.php.
[84] Security Council Report 2026
[85] Gifkins, Jess. 2021. "Beyond the Veto: Roles in UN Security Council Decision-Making." *Global Governance* 27 (1): 1–24. https://doi.org/10.1163/19426720-02701003.

and grab its natural resources while its people starve and die.

Other questions delegates should consider include: How should sanctions be balanced between rewarding progress and punishing obstruction? What role should regional organizations such as the African Union have in comparison with the Security Council? How can the international community prevent the exploitation of minerals from fueling the war.

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