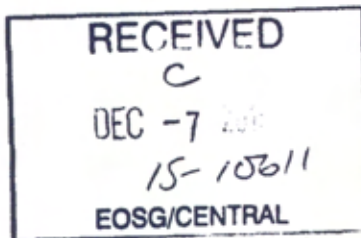


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Note to the Secretary-General

0412115

DRC/MONUSCO: strategic dialogue between the Government and the United Nations

1. At your request and following the letter from the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) to the Security Council of 5 October, I dispatched a small team to the DRC, from 23 to 28 November, to have a "fresh look" at the progress made by the Government in improving the security situation and in addressing the threat posed by armed groups, and to develop recommendations on a way forward in the strategic dialogue between the Government and the United Nations, in consultation with MONUSCO. The team met with Foreign Minister Raymond Tshibanda twice, and received briefings from MONUSCO, the United Nations Country Team and partners in Kinshasa and Goma, including from the field presences in Dungu, Ituri, South Kivu and North Kivu.
2. Foreign Minister Tshibanda welcomed the visit and the United Nations' efforts to "begin listening to the Government" and to overcome the impasse. While he recognized that the DRC remained a fragile country and that it continued to face military threats, he reiterated the Government's position that there was no need to retain 20,000 United Nations peacekeepers in the country. He also reaffirmed the willingness of his Government to re-engage in discussions and to cooperate with MONUSCO, should there be a demonstration of goodwill from the United Nations. The Minister added that a favourable outcome of discussions would help the new leadership team to work with the Government to address outstanding issues and to ensure that MONUSCO could complete its mandate "in beauty".
3. Most interlocutors acknowledged efforts by the *Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo* (FARDC) to neutralize armed groups, including the ADF, FDLR and FRPI, as well as, most recently, Mayi-Mayi Yakutumba, during which the army suffered heavy casualties. Confirming the findings of the joint assessments conducted by the Government and MONUSCO earlier this year, the team witnessed that there has been some progress of the security situation in a number of areas in 2015, including in the provinces of Bas Uele, Haut Uele, Ituri, South Kivu and Tshopo. Interlocutors also identified the start of the national disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme as an important development in the efforts to address the threat of armed groups.
4. Interlocutors further recognized the FARDC's enhanced rapid-deployment capability and its ability to launch operations, but admitted their having difficulties in sustaining them. In their view, the reorganization of the army, training efforts and the establishment of a salary payment system have yielded positive results, while overall, fewer abuses were committed by national security forces during these operations. Interlocutors also highlighted the commitment of the Government to hold perpetrators of violence accountable, to combat sexual violence, and to end the recruitment of children. In spite of the progress made, most interlocutors assessed that more needed to be done in order to sustain the gains made thus far, in particular with regard to the extension of State authority and of sustainable solutions for reintegrating former combatants.

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5. Interlocutors also pointed to other threats to stability in the DRC. The situation in many territories of eastern DRC remains volatile, and potential implications of the unfolding crisis in Burundi will need to be monitored carefully, in particular in South Kivu. The team took note of political tensions and uncertainties surrounding the elections, and a risk of civil unrest and violence in the months leading to the elections, should the announced national dialogue fail to bring a consensus. Most interlocutors welcomed the dialogue initiative in principle, provided that this would not lead to further *glissement* or constitutional changes. MONUSCO has already reported an increasing number of human rights violations in connection with the electoral process, as well as cases of political violence.

6. Further to resolution 2211 (2015) authorizing the reduction of 2,000 military personnel, MONUSCO developed a plan to transform its Force in order to enhance its effectiveness through the creation of rapidly deployable battalions and by enhancing mobility and intelligence capacities. In addition, MONUSCO has identified inefficiencies, allowing it to eliminate duplication or redundancies of its capabilities. In spite of these elements, many interlocutors expressed concern about the perceived lack of willingness of some contingents to take proactive and robust action to protect civilians under threat.

7. Against this backdrop, the team, in consultation with MONUSCO, recommended to reduce the Force by approximately two battalions (1,700 troops), in addition to the planned reduction of the 2,000 military personnel authorized by resolution 2211 (2015). This proposed additional reduction would be based on projected capability and efficiency gains from the transformation of the Force. A successful transformation will therefore be critical to ensuring that MONUSCO retains the necessary capability to implement its mandate. This effort will require additional resources and a commitment that the rapidly-deployable battalions will meet specific requirements. The first rapidly-deployable battalion is expected to deploy to South Kivu in February 2016. While we assessed that there are no operational risks to a further reduction of 1,700 troops, this would potentially negatively affect the current factors of instability during an election year, and decrease the Mission's capabilities, should the Force transformation not be completed and resourced in a timely and effective manner. In view of increasing law and order challenges during the electoral period, we further recommend that MONUSCO review its civilian deployment, in particular the police component. These findings will be included in the next report on MONUSCO, due in March 2016.

8. The DSRSG and the DPKO team subsequently briefed Foreign Minister Tshibanda on this proposed way forward. He recognized the effort made by the United Nations to find some common ground. He observed that it may not be sufficient "to convince the hardliners", indicating that a reduction of four to five battalions would be better received. The Minister stressed that a reduction of approximately two battalions would need to be accompanied with a prospect for further reductions in 2016. He also indicated that the Government was ready to engage in discussions to jointly develop an exit strategy, and welcomed the Mission's proposal to prepare a non-paper to kick-start the discussions. While positive, this is clearly linked to the expectation of further reductions in 2016, and there is a risk that this be viewed as the start in a series of negotiations.

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9. In an informal meeting with permanent members of the Security Council on 1 December, France, the United Kingdom and the United States expressed strong reservations about the proposed additional troop reduction, which they view as giving in to the Government, and underscored the risk that the Government may not reciprocate by re-engaging in the strategic dialogue. Russia and China welcomed the proposal, which they felt would help improve cooperation with the Government.

10. Following careful consideration of the opportunities and risks and consultations with SRSG Sidikou and SESG Djinnit, we believe that the time has come to take concrete measures to resolve the impasse between the Government and MONUSCO. The Mission faces the risk of becoming irrelevant as a result of the Government's lack of cooperation, which compromises effective mandate implementation. Taking into account the increasingly complex situation in the DRC in the context of the 2016 elections, we believe that it would be important to seize this opportunity in order to create a productive environment for the new MONUSCO leadership and to resume cooperation with the Government, including in operations against armed groups and in the development of an exit strategy, which should guide any further reduction of troops. Should the Government fail to honour its commitments, we would have sufficient ground to report back to the Council and recommend a review of our engagement in the DRC, taking into account the non-cooperation of the Government.

11. We therefore propose submitting this recommendation in the form of a Secretary-General letter to the Security Council by mid-December, while simultaneously starting discussions on an exit strategy for MONUSCO. This should be viewed as a first step towards developing an overall framework with the Government in line with the parameters outlined by resolution 2211 (2015). Such framework would guide future troop reductions by basing them on specific conditions, and would determine a geographical approach to the exit strategy.


Hervé Ladsous
4 December 2015

cc: Mr. Eliasson
Mr. Mulet
Mr. Feltman
Mr. Khare
SRSG Sidikou
SESG Djinnit



Fw: 3-2015-20201 - DRC/MONUSCO: Note to the SG on the strategic dialogue between the Government and the United Nations

SGCentral to: Hazel Foster
Sent by: Jill Annitto

07/12/2015 09:03 AM

—— Forwarded by Jill Annitto/NY/UNO on 07/12/2015 09:03 AM ——

From: DPKO-DFS-Correspondence/NY/UNO
To: SGCentral/NY/UNO@UNHQ
Cc: Maria Zaroui/NY/UNO@UNHQ, Silva Armani/NY/UNO@UNHQ, Dora Przybylek/NY/UNO@UNHQ, DPKO-DFS-Correspondence/NY/UNO@UNHQ, Claudia Banz/NY/UNO@UNHQ, Egline Jean-Francois/NY/UNO@UNHQ, Ellen Gerlach/NY/UNO@UNHQ, DPKO OUSG front office
Date: 04/12/2015 08:57 PM
Subject: 3-2015-20201 - DRC/MONUSCO: Note to the SG on the strategic dialogue between the Government and the United Nations
Sent by: Nay Minn Tun

Dear colleagues,

Please find attached document on above subject. For any question or concern, please contact the drafter directly. Thank you.

Drafter: Claudia Banz (Ext. 3-4176)



3-2015-20201 (HL) - Note.pdf

Have a nice weekend.

Nay

Regards,

*Nay Minn Tun (Mr.), Editorial Assistant
Correspondence Team, Office of the Chief of Staff
Department of Peacekeeping Operations /
Department of Field Support
United Nations*

Tel.: 917-367-9651 (Ext. 7-9651)

*E-mail: tun1@un.org
dpko-dfs-correspondence@un.org*

*Office: Secretariat Building
405 E 42 Street, Room S-3502
New York 10017 USA*