



THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

20 September 2011

Dear Mr. President,

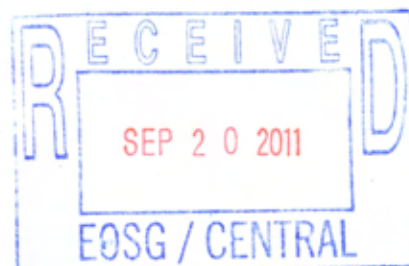
I would like to bring to your attention a matter of great concern regarding the acute shortage of military helicopters in the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO).

MONUSCO currently has only 14 military helicopters, comprising 10 utility helicopters and 4 observation helicopters. The Mission is facing a shortfall of 6 military utility helicopters. The Mission has no attack helicopters at this time.

MONUSCO military helicopter assets are deployed exclusively in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, namely in the Kivus and Province Orientale. Of the Mission's 10 military utility helicopters, 6 are deployed in Province Orientale in support of military operations to address the presence of the Lord's Resistance Army, whose murderous attacks against civilians in the Democratic Republic of the Congo have once again been on the rise, as well as remnant Ituri militia. The remaining 4 military utility helicopters are deployed in the Kivus; 2 of these are light helicopters with reduced capacity.

The impact of the shortage of military helicopters on the implementation of the MONUSCO mandate has become critical. Joint operations with the Congolese Armed Forces have had to be postponed, investigations of allegations of mass human rights violations have had to be delayed, and some deployments to protection hot-spots have had to be deferred. Getting essential supplies to United Nations troops in far-flung, volatile areas has also been extremely difficult. This is made all the more critical in the run-up to presidential and parliamentary elections scheduled in the Democratic Republic of the Congo on 28 November 2011.

His Excellency
Mr. Nawaf Salam
President of the Security Council
New York



11-09165

PKG/03/002

The Secretariat has vigorously pursued contacts with troop contributing countries over the past year regarding the provision of military helicopters. As a result, South Africa has pledged to provide MONUSCO with an additional military utility helicopter.

The Secretariat is also closely involved with the Security Council members and other Member States to address the root causes of this critical capability gap across United Nations peacekeeping operations, thinking "outside the box" for new and innovative solutions. I have personally led several of these initiatives, and we have been actively supported in these efforts by a number of Member States.

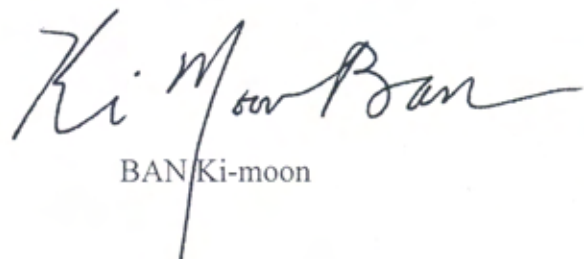
However, we do not foresee a deployment of additional military helicopter assets to MONUSCO, beyond the pledge by South Africa, before the end of this year.

Critical capability gaps within United Nations peacekeeping operations are unfortunately not confined to MONUSCO. However, the current lack of military helicopters in MONUSCO has become acute, and it is my duty to inform you that the Mission is no longer able to carry out critical parts of its priority mandated tasks, including in relation to the protection of civilians, providing support to the elections and putting an end to the presence of armed groups, particularly in the Kivus.

I am concerned that if this situation is not addressed by the Security Council, the largest United Nations peacekeeping operation will be at risk of failure, with serious consequences for lives and livelihoods for the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The credibility of the Security Council and of the United Nations is also at risk.

I would be grateful if you could bring the present letter to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

Please accept, Mr. President, the assurances of my highest consideration.



BAN Ki-moon

United Nations



Nations Unies

Executive Office of the Secretary-General
Cabinet du Secrétaire général

#1 PRIORITY

To: Mr. Nambiar,

Please find attached for your approval and SG signature, a letter to the President the Security Council informing the Security Council that due to the shortfall of helicopters, MONUSCO is no longer able to carry out critical parts of its priority mandated tasks.

Although this shortfall and its impact on the activities of the Mission has been repeated several times in the past year in briefings to the Council, letters to TCCs and SG reports – without results – it is the first time that the link between mandated tasks and capabilities is made in a letter to the Council.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Nicholas Haysom'.

Nicholas Haysom
20 September 2011

Cc: KWS

11-09165

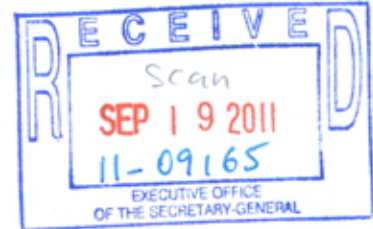
**ACTION
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CONFIDENTIAL

Immediate

Note to Mr. Nambiar



Related # 11-05354

Helicopter capability gap in MONUSCO

1. Despite our concerted efforts to generate additional pledges of military helicopters for MONUSCO, including the Secretary-General's and your personal involvement in high-level diplomatic initiatives, MONUSCO's shortage of military helicopters has become acute.
2. The Mission's four remaining attack helicopters stopped flying on 4 July and are currently being repatriated to India. Although MONUSCO has an authorized strength of 48 military helicopters, that number has been reduced to 14, including four observation helicopters.
3. As a result, MONUSCO has become unable to carry out critical parts of its priority mandated tasks, including in relation to the protection of civilians, providing support to the elections and putting an end to the presence of armed groups, particularly in the Kivus.
4. I am concerned that this situation is putting the credibility of the Security Council and the United Nations itself at risk. The largest United Nations peacekeeping operation is also at risk of failure, with serious consequences for the people of the DRC.
5. As such, I would be grateful for your consideration in seeking the Secretary-General's agreement to send the attached draft letter to the President of the Security Council requesting Council members' concerted attention to this important matter.

Edmond Mulet
16 September 2011

cc: Ms. Malcorra

P/C 103/1007