

May 6, 2019

The Honorable Senator Patrick J. Leahy
Ranking Member
State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
Room S-128, The Capitol,
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Ghaham,

Re UN Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo - MONUSCO

The Africa faith & Justice Network (AFJN) was among many organizations that called on the United States and the international community to send a United Nations (UN) mission to the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) during and after its invasion by Rwanda and Uganda in 1996. AFJN also joined many other organizations to advocate for a more robust mandate to allow the UN mission root out armed groups. Over the years, the UN mission has contributed tremendously to the stability of the DRC for which we are grateful.

It has come to our attention however, that presently all is not well with the UN mission in the DRC. The situation we understand, has been building up over the past several years. There are allegations of gross mismanagement, taking advantage of the Congolese people and exploiting the conflict situation for personal gains. More specifically, there are allegations of corruption, theft of funds, ghost hospitals, ghost employees or duplicate employment, overbilling and misinvoicing, mistreatment of Congolese staff and hiring of unqualified international staff because of personal relationship. Our sources stand ready to testify under strict confidentiality for security reasons upon your request.

Although this information has come from credible and reliable sources, we on our part have not independently verified these allegations. However, as an advocacy organization concerned with the welfare of the African peoples, and working to combat corruption and promote transparency and accountability in African communities, we feel obliged to bring this issue to your attention as members of the United States Congress (a major contributor to UN operations) to act as you deem fit and in such a way that it would bring change to the current situation and hopefully for future UN mission globally.

The UN Resolution 2463, adopted by the Security Council at its 8498th meeting, on 29 March 2019 calls for **Strategic review and exit strategy** so as to “progressively transfer MONUSCO’s tasks to the Government of the DRC, the UNCT and other relevant stakeholders,” and “to conduct and provide the Security Council, no later than 20 October 2019, with an independent strategic review of MONUSCO assessing the continued challenges to peace and security in the DRC” (§§ 44-45).

Today, May 6, 2019 the DRC MONUSCO staff have started a two-day sit-in at the UN office in Kinshasa and across the DRC demanding that the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General in the DRC rescind the decision to terminate 555 national staff jobs scheduled for June 30, 2019. They observe that this is contrary to the UN Resolution 2463 of March 19, 2019 which calls for the staffing level to remain unchanged. They further note that while DRC local staff is marked for termination, the Special Representative is hiring international staff whose salaries, bonuses, and other benefits constitute a far bigger budgetary burden than the amount allocated to national staff.

We are appealing to you as members of Congress and as a matter of urgency, to set in place the mechanisms to:

1. Hold a hearing so as to establish facts about these allegations
2. Evaluate 20 years of UN peacekeeping mission, its effectiveness and shortcoming
3. Work with the Trump administration to compel the UN Security Council to order an audit of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission (MONUSCO) in the DRC
4. Demand an immediate stop the ongoing rushed closure of MONUSCO's field offices and Antenna to preserve evidence.
5. Ensure that witnesses are not intimidated and reinstate local staff who have been unjustly terminated contrary to current mandate detailed in UN Resolution 2463 of March 29, 2019 which approved the maintenance of current staffing level.

We will be obliged to provide you additional information and clarifications related to this matter and, can reached at 202-817-3670 or at director@afjn.org or bahati@afjn.org.

Sincerely,



Rev. Aniedi Okure, OP
Executive Director