

## UK STATEMENT

## Universal Periodic Review – Democratic Republic of Congo

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Thank you Mr President,

The UK thanks the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) for its contribution to the Universal Periodic Review Process and its willingness to engage.

The UK remains concerned about the human rights situation in the DRC. Serious human rights abuses and violations continue, including the murder and rape of civilians and the recruitment of children. The UK remains concerned about the lack of credible investigations, leading to a culture of impunity for the worst offences.

While we welcome signs of greater commitment by the government of the DRC to fight impunity, the UK believes that there remains an urgent need to address the causes and consequences of sexual and gender based violence in the DRC, and to consistently ensure that perpetrators are brought to justice.

Congolese authorities have made good progress in removing children from within the ranks of the army, although the recruitment and use of child soldiers by armed groups remains of particular concern.

A moratorium on the use of the death penalty has been in place for the past decade and we believe it should now conclusively be abolished.

The UK has two **recommendations**:

- First, that the DRC government ensures that perpetrators of crimes of sexual violence are consistently brought to justice, and guarantees the protection of witnesses and survivors.
- Second, that the DRC government develops and implements a new Disarmament, Demobilisation, and Reintegration programme for dealing with armed groups, ensuring that former combatants are given realistic opportunities to reintegrate into the community and that children involved with armed groups are treated in line with international law.