

UN opens international probe into alleged abuses in DR Congo's Kasai provinces

23 June 2017 – The United Nations today opened an international investigation into alleged killings, mutilations and destruction of entire villages in the Democratic Republic of the Congo's restive Kasai provinces.

The UN Human Rights Council, comprised of 47 countries, adopted the resolution by consensus during a meeting earlier today in Geneva.

The victims – those who have been killed, maimed, subjected to terrible violence and forced from their homes – deserve justice, said UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, who has been called on to appoint a team of international experts to carry out the investigation.

In a statement, Mr. Zeid, who has repeatedly called for a probe, said the creation of the investigation is "a step forward in identifying [the perpetrators of gross violations and bringing them to justice](#)."

His office said it expects and counts on "the full cooperation of the authorities" including "unfettered access to all sites, files, people and places."

He added that the team will conduct investigations "in a fully independent manner, in accordance with international standards."

Addressing the Council on Tuesday, Mr. Zeid recounted chilling details of apparent ethnic violence that included mutilated babies and fetuses.

Violence flared up in the DRC's Kasai regions in August 2016, when a customary chief was killed by Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo (FARDC), as DRC's armed forces are known. The Kamuina Nsapu militia (named after the chief) then set about avenging the killing, committing widespread atrocities as well as recruiting children into its ranks.

The gravity of the situation was further underscored by the discovery in April of forty-two mass graves by Mr. Zeid's office ([OHCHR](#)) and the UN mission in the country, known by its French acronym, MONUSCO.

Since the start of the violence, more than 1.3 million people have since been displaced within the country as well as thousands forced to flee across its borders.