

# DR Congo: UN rights chief calls on Government to halt violence by security forces

20 February 2017 – The United Nations human rights chief today called on the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) to take immediate steps to halt widespread human rights violations, including apparent summary executions, by the country's armed forces.

It is time to stop a blunt military response that does nothing to tackle the root causes of the conflict between the Government and local militias but instead targets civilians on the basis of their presumed links to the militias, said UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein in a news release from his office (OHCHR).

Mr. Zeid said that there are multiple, credible allegations of massive human rights violations in the provinces of Kasai, Kasai Central, Kasai Oriental and Lomami amid a sharp deterioration in security situation there.

A local militia linked to a customary chief, Kamuina Nsapu, who was killed by the African country's armed forces in August 2016 has been increasingly active in Kasai Central Province, mostly attacking government buildings and churches, and national security forces. The militia also reportedly recruits and uses children.

According to OCHR, horrific video footage emerged over the weekend apparently showing soldiers of the Government security forces, known as FARDC, shooting repeatedly and without warning at men and women, who purportedly belonged to the militia in Muenza Nsapu village.

The UN peacekeeping mission in the DRC is not in a position to verify the origin and authenticity of the video. However, the DRC Government spokesperson has stated that FARDC officers are under judicial investigation.

The UN Joint Human Rights Office in the country has documented the killings of more than 280 individuals since July 2016 in the context of this violence.

Amid a worrying escalation of violence in provinces considered relatively calm, I call again on the Government to redouble its efforts to tackle impunity that feeds further violence and human rights violations, said Mr. Zeid.