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DRC National Inclusive Dialogue: Fake News? Or Not?

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Multiple peace initiatives have been undertaken to end the conflict in East-DRC, and each is underpinned by a specific analysis of the causes and nature of the crisis. One strand of analysis sees it as an externally induced military issue (essentially by Rwanda). Another as a combination of internal governance issues for the DRC government on the one hand, and the external expansionist policy of Rwanda. Yet another as a multilayered crisis with longer term root causes explaining its recurrence, and more immediate triggering events and policies, internal as well as external. Awareness of the complexity of the crisis beyond the purely military aspects has been growing, as well as of the necessity of a more comprehensive solution involving internal and external aspects of the crisis. However, for reasons explained below, it is still plausible that a short-term military logic will prevail which will, again, leave the multiple causes of the crisis untouched.

1. DIFFERENT CONCEPTIONS, DIFFERENT PEACE INITIATIVES¹

The current M23 crisis started with demands for repatriation and reintegration from its two factions which were left in Kampala and Kigali after the first M23 conflict in 2012-2013. Negotiation attempts on these claims were not finalized. In 2019, talks with the Kigali-based faction yielded a classical demobilization and reintegration roadmap which was not implemented.² In 2020-2021 a M23 delegation was in Kinshasa for unclear reasons and with no result, before they started armed action again.

Similarly, the national DRC coordinator for the Addis Ababa framework agreement follow-up mechanism, Claude Ibalanky, in April 2022 reportedly had contact with the Kampala-based faction of M23 in view of a negotiated solution but was disavowed by the DRC presidency before the logic of war took fully over.³ The initial claims of M23 were then supplanted by Rwanda which used the M23 as a tool to expand its influence over East Congo.

The first peace initiative, under the leadership of the Eastern African Community (EAC), considered the crisis as a classical problem of demobilization and peacekeeping. It wanted to organize a dialogue with and demobilization of armed groups (in which the M23 was not included as the DRC government qualified it as “[terrorist](#)”) and the setting up of a regional peace force. These efforts failed and the integration of the armed groups in East Congo into the RAD (Armed Defense Reserve), an official component of the RDC government army, suspended de facto the Nairobi process.⁴

In 2022, the Angolan President Lourenço as acting president of the International Conference of the Great Lakes Region, was mandated to start a mediation between the DR Congo and Rwanda. It aimed to obtain a peace agreement between the two countries. A ceasefire agreement was reached in June 2024 and a concept of operations defined which linked the withdrawal of the Rwandan army to the neutralization of the FDLR. The agreement was finally not signed because Rwanda claimed direct negotiations of the DRC with the M23 movement – which the DRC had always refused. Meanwhile, in December 2023 a political arm of the M23 was created as the AFC or the “Congo River Alliance”.

The USA got more actively involved after the occupation of Goma and Bukavu and the extension of M23-controlled territory. Their basic idea is almost based on the rational choice and profit maximization theory in classical economics: to convince the parties in conflict that regional economic cooperation is more profitable in the longer term than war. In this sense, a “Regional Economic Integration Framework Between the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Government of the Republic of Rwanda” was undersigned on 4 December 2025 in Washington. This was completed by, on the one hand, an (unpublished) “U.S.-Rwanda Framework for Shared Economic Prosperity” agreement between the US and Rwanda, and a strategic partnership agreement between the USA and the DR Congo. In order for this to work, a peace agreement (for a war that was never declared) was undersigned between the DR Congo and Rwanda, but which conditions it on the neutralization and the “irreversible and verifiable end of state support for FDLR and associated armed groups”⁵, leaving Rwanda as the judge.

Upon intervention from Qatar, the DRC finally agreed to negotiate with the M23, and this ended finally up on 15 November 2025 in a framework agreement including 8 protocols, two of which had already been negotiated and undersigned.⁶ Contrary to the other approaches, these protocols include one about restoration of state authority, reforms, and national participatory governance arrangements. The protocol is formulated in rather general terms, similarly to previous arrangements in the 23 March 2009 agreement with the CNDP⁷ and the 12 December 2013 declaration by the government at the end of the negotiations with the M23.

Finally, the African Union adopted a more comprehensive approach to the conflict in East-Congo. The African Union Mediator and President of Togo Faure Gnassingbé, during a meeting on 17 January, tried to harmonize and coordinate the various negotiation processes.⁸ There seems to be a consensus about the multiple layered nature of the current East Congo crisis, including its regional aspect with the expansionist policy of Rwanda but also of Uganda, the legitimacy problem in Kinshasa, the international

transactional diplomacy focused on critical raw materials, and the institutional weakness of the DRC state and military structures. The conviction is gaining ground that a solution cannot be found in bilateral agreements, be it between the USA and the DRC or between Kinshasa and M23/AFC, but in a global agreement, politically sustainable and regionally guaranteed. Part of this agreement would be what is called an “inclusive political dialogue” with the government, M23/AFC, the political opposition, and civil society, for reasons which will be detailed below.⁹

On 9 February 2026, the African Union mediation team for the crisis in East Congo, with the DRC President Tshisekedi, and under the leadership of Joao Lourenço, president of Angola and of the African Union, mandated Angola to initiate consultations with all interested parties in order to create the conditions necessary to set up a “Congoese dialogue”. This initiative, supported by all involved African heads of state, is reportedly also fully supported by the United States. The 5 March 2026 joint statement from the International Contact Group for the Great Lakes “recalls the importance of creating conditions for an inclusive inter-Congoese dialogue with all key Congoese stakeholders – a necessary element for durable peace in the DRC – and welcome the consultations undertaken by the Republic of Angola”¹⁰.

To get all stakeholders on the same page is a huge challenge, which the Angolan mediation is trying to achieve by setting up the framework for a dialogue with a limited number of 90 participants (30 government, 30 political and military opposition, 30 civil society including the Churches).¹¹ Angola is able to work with utmost discretion, an excellent knowledge of the DRC politics and military, a position of impartiality in the region, and the skills to draw the consequences of the dialogue to the regional level.¹² Will this be enough?

2. DIALOGUE: LESSONS FROM THE PAST

Previous experiences with dialogues and round tables yielded mixed results. They were brought about by a failure of the prevailing institutions to solve existential problems for the country. Two important Round Tables

(January-February 1960 leading up to independence; Sun City and Pretoria negotiations leading up to the 3rd Republic) set up new regimes based on a constitution. The 1991-92 Sovereign National Conference ended the personal dictatorship of President Mobutu. Other instances of dialogue were meant to push through the government's agenda ([2013 national consultations](#)) or to find a temporary compromise between political elites ([2017 Saint Sylvester Agreement](#)).

More recently, a sequence of dialogues was meant to end an armed conflict resulting from the non-respect of a consensual constitutional order. Each time, a movement led by Kinyarwanda speaking Congolese, in various degrees controlled by Kigali, alleging [anti-Tutsi discrimination](#), pushed for political and military integration and governance reforms. The 23 March 2009 agreement between the CNDP movement and the DRC government included measures to end the conflict, demobilization, and integration but also governance related reforms and local reconciliation processes. Integration of CNDP elements into the government army provided them with a disproportionate influence, more specifically in the East.

The first M23 crisis in 2012-2013, allegedly started because of non-implementation of the 2009 agreement (a position contested by most stakeholders), after lengthy negotiations did not end up in an agreement but two separate (and similar) declarations in 2013. A regional framework was set up by a "Peace Security and Cooperation framework agreement" that aimed at broadening the existing regional framework of the International Conference on the Great Lakes (ICGLR) created in 2006.¹³ The agreement and follow-up mechanisms contributed to the solution of some key problems (including FDLR demobilization) but failed to tackle the root causes of the conflict it wanted to address.¹⁴

Common to the series of agreements is lack of implementation once the military threat is over, because of the absence of a sanctioning mechanism, more specifically of the non-military aspects including local reconciliation. The most successful outcome was the ["Global and inclusive agreement"](#) of 17 December 2002 resulting

from the broad-based Sun City and Pretoria negotiations after the 1998-2002 war. Thanks to intensive regional and international involvement, a military stalemate and national stakeholder engagement, it provided a framework for stability for more than 20 years. However, various actors, including Kabila, the rebel movements in the East, and most of all the current President Tshisekedi who wants to modify or replace the 2006 constitution, increasingly disrespected this framework. From this point of view, a broad based "national and inclusive dialogue" could try to find options guaranteeing a return to longer term stability.

In the following the position of the various main stakeholders towards a "national and inclusive dialogue" is explored.

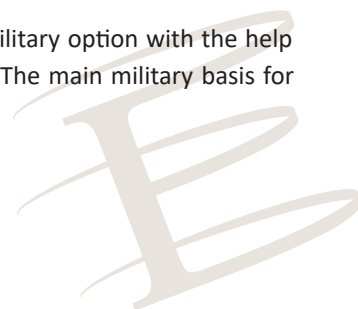
3. INCLUSIVE DIALOGUE: POSITIONS OF THE MAIN STAKEHOLDERS

A. The DRC Presidency

President Tshisekedi from the outset underlined the recurrence of the conflict in East-Congo and consistently refused to recognize the M23 as an autonomous movement with a proper agenda, accepting exclusively negotiations with what he considers to be its real patron, Rwanda's President Kagame. Given previous outcomes of negotiations with movements supported by Rwanda, this position is understandable, but impossible to maintain without an efficient army.

The deeply corrupt and [disorganized](#) government army deprives Tshisekedi from the one asset which could stop Rwanda and neutralize the M23. He relies on the presidential Republican Guard (increasingly led by officers from his own Kasai community) more than on the FARDC government army, but the use of this military force extends to the protection of mining sites for personal exploitation. The FARDC government army is also deconstructed by many arbitrary arrests of high officers [accused of treason](#).

Still, he seems to prefer a military option with the help of mercenaries and drones. The main military basis for



launching drones in Kisangani is currently an important target for M23,¹⁵ and the precisely targeted [killing of the M23 spokesman](#) was aimed at demonstrating its efficiency. The peace agreement between DRC and Rwanda is ineffective because, as ever, it still conditions the withdrawal of Rwandan troops to the elusive neutralization of the FDLR.

Still, Tshisekedi offered key sections of the DRC mining sector to the USA in exchange for diplomatic and possibly limited military support, as detailed in the strategic partnership agreement and the unpublished framework security agreement.¹⁶ The alliance of the USA with the DR Congo,¹⁷ beyond its previously close relationship with Rwanda, led to the issuing of important new [US sanctions](#) against the Rwandan Defense Force and Rwanda's military leadership.

From this position of force, there do not seem to be many reasons for Tshisekedi to engage in a political dialogue with political or military opposition and civil society, as this may put into question the core elements of his strategy and partnership with the USA. Other stakeholders may require guarantees for the next elections scheduled for 2028 and most of all may counter President's Tshisekedi's project to modify or replace the 2006 constitution.

Indeed, since the end of 2024, Tshisekedi and members of the ruling coalition brandish questionable arguments about the necessity to change the 2006 constitution, which try to dissimulate the real objective which is to remove the limits to the number and duration of presidential mandates to remain in power.¹⁸ His UDPS party feels that they are entitled to the presidency for at least as long as the previous regimes because of the struggle they waged for democracy and the rule of law since the creation of the party in 1982.

However, Tshisekedi does not seem to rely on his party to structure his rule, instead preferring a personal rule of himself with his family. It is remarkable that the UDPS after the 2023 elections which were widely considered as fraudulent¹⁹ has a mere 52 of the 500 seats. Indeed, many UDPS officials were put instead on coalition party

lists, probably indicating that Tshisekedi does not want to depend on a dominant party in parliament. There is also important discontent within the UDPS party about what they perceive as a departure from the original ideals of the UDPS party (for democracy and the rule of law) to the benefit of nepotism, corruption, and arbitrary rule. This came in to the open in August 2024 when the party's deputy secretary general Déo Bizibu [was presented](#) by the "Democratic Convention of the Party" as the new secretary general.²⁰ Bizibu relies more on the pre-2018 UDPS party officials while the current secretary general and acting president Augustin Kabuya manages the party by personal rule, and with the assistance of youth sections, policemen and military, and personal appointees.²¹ A UDPS congress was announced for December 2025, with the objective to restructure the party's leadership, but it was postponed, reportedly under influence of Kabuya who feared destitution.

The Tshisekedi regime also has a serious legitimacy problem. In all likelihood, he became president in 2019 without [having](#) won the elections (the real results were known but ignored).²² In 2023, the electoral results were to an important extent rigged at the local level, leaving the National Assembly with a lack of credibility. The (indirect) senatorial elections were marred by [high levels of corruption](#).

The current regime has been confronted with many corruption scandals, in [several cases](#) involving [members of the presidential family](#). This led to the submission of a judicial [complaint](#) in Belgium against members of the presidential family who, after a prolonged stay in this country, acquired the Belgian nationality. However, increasing repression has reduced many [dissident opinions to silence](#). Tshisekedi and his [intelligence service](#) succeeded to reshape the political landscape into a binary opposition between the "real patriots" and the "traitors". According to a prevailing opinion within the "Sacred Union" ruling coalition, and more specifically the UDPS, the DRC since the overthrow of Mobutu in 1997 was controlled by Rwanda who infiltrated the country's military and political structures.²³



B. The Politico-Military Opposition: M23/AFC

In December 2023 the M23 military movement got a political expression as the “Alliance Fleuve Congo” under leadership of the former CENI²⁴ president [Corneille Nangaa](#), the architect of the electoral fraud which brought Felix Tshisekedi to power. Contrary to the previous RCD movement in 1998-2002, the AFC failed to mobilize significant support. The repression in Kinshasa against anyone allegedly associated with M23 may have helped to block any political leaders to cross over to Goma. The movement is said to be allied with former President Kabila who would be planning to return to power, but there is no hard evidence. This lack of political support implies the necessity for the M23/AFC to rely on political opposition inside the country, or purely on military force.

The M23/AFC was never really interested in a “national inclusive dialogue” and as long it is confident in its own military strength, it does not seem to have any intention to ally with the political opposition which has not supported its armed struggle.²⁵ The repeated calls from Corneille Nangaa for a “[constitutional revolution](#)” also seems to indicate a project to change or replace the current constitution by M23/AFC. They may fear that a genuine dialogue will reduce or eliminate their control over East Congo. However, if Rwanda under US pressure withdraws or reduces its support for M23/AFC the movement will be forced to coordinate with the same opposition facing Kinshasa.

C. The Political Opposition

After the fraudulent 2023 electoral process, the political opposition in parliament is even more weakened than before, passing from 120 seats to 24 in the National Assembly and from 7 to 3 in the Senate. Contrary to the UDPS party which controls a network of militants at the bottom of the social hierarchy, the militant support basis of the opposition is much smaller. More general popular support is unknown, but there seems to be a general sentiment of rejection of the “political class,” all tendencies included.²⁶ Paradoxically, facing the reluctance of Tshisekedi to engage in a dialogue, their negotiating

power depends considerably on the military pressure and threat of progression towards Lubumbashi and Kinshasa from the M23/AFC.

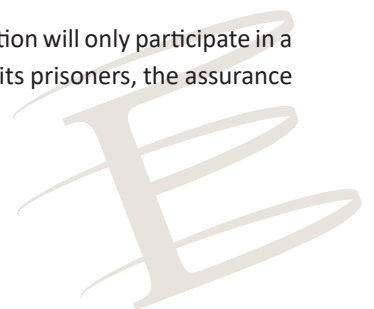
Joseph Kabila is the DRC presidency’s scapegoat. The perceived alignment of Kabila with the M23/AFC, after his appearances in M23-occupied Goma, led to his [condemnation to death](#) by a Military Court, the [suspension](#) of activities of his PPRD party, and the arrest or persecution of many [PPRD officials](#). Unfortunately, Kabila also did not display political subtlety when he made a [speech](#) in Nairobi basically saying that the very good situation under his rule was completely swept away under Tshisekedi, making his return a necessity. In October 2025 he created a movement “Let’s Save the Congo”²⁷ with limited success. Kabila also put forward never exceedingly popular PPRD officials as his collaborators, instead of trying to craft a “new Kabila” who had learned from past errors.

Moise Katumbi’s Ensemble party probably still has important support in his native Katanga province, although his lack of political initiative since the 2023 elections is negatively perceived in the province. The party is also somehow divided over its strategy between the deputies in parliament under [Christian Mwando](#) and a group in exile which prefers a [radical break](#) with Tshisekedi, led by Olivier Kamitatu.

Martin Fayulu, the likely winner of the 2018 elections, has consistently (with Ensemble) claimed a national and inclusive dialogue, free and fair elections in 2028, and has at the same time kept his distances with the M23/AFC.²⁸ He tries to position himself as the compromise figure between Tshisekedi and the M23 and supports the initiative taken by CENCO/ECC (see below).

Other opposition figures as e.g., Delly Sessanga may be convincing as individual leaders but do not have a strong party organization. Several other opposition leaders, who reject the Tshisekedi regime, fled and are in exile.

However, the political opposition will only participate in a dialogue after the release of its prisoners, the assurance



of security guarantees and, for the PPRD, the lifting of the condemnation to death of Joseph Kabila. This would require a policy change by the government.

D. Civil Society

The most active associations within civil society are human rights NGO's and associations specialized in the mining sector. Several NGOs active in human rights and democratization were de facto led by UDPS supporters who were coopted into the structures of government or presidency; others were bought off or intimidated. The important cuts in funding from the USA and other countries also contributed to their weakening. If a national and inclusive dialogue takes place, stakeholders will try to manipulate representation to their benefit through associations as independent churches, pastors²⁹ or activists.

4. THE INITIATIVE OF THE CATHOLIC AND PROTESTANT CHURCHES

For historical reasons,³⁰ the Catholic Church was always independent towards the government structures and a heavyweight in the political landscape. Archbishop Laurent Monsengwo led with great skill the Sovereign National Conference in 1991-92, and the CENCO (Congolese Catholic Bishop's Conference) played a key role in the movement against constitutional change under Joseph Kabila which prevented him to renew his presidential term. The relations of the Catholic Church with the UDPS have never been optimal: the party always considered its support for Etienne Tshisekedi as insufficient.

The "Church of Christ in Congo" (ECC) is the union of protestant en evangelical churches of the DRC. Until 2016 aligned with the presidency, it allied with the Catholic Church in its opposition to a constitutional change to the benefit of Kabila.

Although reliable statistics are non-existent in the DRC, the number of Catholics is estimated at between 30%³¹ and half of the population³²; and the protestants at approx. between 26.7% and 30%.³³ They represent thus a majority

of the population in the DRC. Within the current DRC landscape of a weak political opposition and civil society, they have an independent voice and real moral authority.

In December 2024, both Churches formulated a peace proposal embedded in a longer-term vision for the DR Congo. Instead of relying only on regional or international peace initiatives, they suggested first to reinforce national unity around what they call a "social pact" or a broad consensus between a broad array of national stakeholders on a series of fundamental options and values for the future.

This vision is to be elaborated, discussed and implemented during several years until the 100th birthday of the DRC in 2060. Their peace initiative for the ongoing war is part of this long-term effort.³⁴ Facing the current territorial division of the country, it should also include the M23/AFC movement to imply these in a Congolese movement independent from outside interference (from Rwanda and Uganda). According to the CENCO-ECC, this movement is based on Congolese actors who cannot be excluded from a peace initiative.

The Churches want to avoid the conclusion of some sort of elite settlement where the fundamental problems leading up to the recurrent crises in East-Congo would not be addressed and the voices of the population highjacked by private political or military elite interests. This is why they call for an "expert dialogue" where practice experts and analysts make proposals to address these fundamental problems. Their contribution would be led at parish level and synthesized by a commission created by CENCO-ECC. Their report would be the frame of reference for an inclusive national dialogue.

Rigobert Minani ranks three distinct categories of causes for the recurrent crises in the East: structural, triggering, and amplifying causes.³⁵ The CENCO-ECC idea is probably to address the triggering and amplifying causes during a national dialogue within the framework of structural causes. Among the triggering causes, Minani mentions the failure of the democratic process, weak transparency norms in natural resources management, manipulation of

references of identity, and creation of self-defense armed groups.

The proposal of the CENCO-ECC is based on an analysis of the current conflict as the symptom of a profound societal crisis (including deep divisions within the country) which calls for a comprehensive and not a piecemeal or provisional solution.³⁶

A real “social pact” which should be the outcome of a national dialogue obviously calls for an engagement to privilege the longer-term options for the DRC, implying a limitation to the decision-making monopoly of the presidency and government, and going far beyond the timeframe of the next elections.

The internal cohesion created by the “social pact” would then be a solid foundation to defend the DRC at the regional level, more specifically towards Rwanda and Uganda in a regional conference.

Regretfully, many diplomats consider this initiative as appropriate but idealistic and focused on a long-term comprehensive approach. This perception is based on incorrect information about the initiative and an inadequate communication policy from CENCO-ECC. The “expert dialogue” is not an academic exercise but an already ongoing process which, according to CENCO-ECC, would take no more than three weeks to complete.³⁷

The DRC presidency seems to refuse any contestation of its authority, while the idea of the social pact is not to contest the presidency but to provide a larger and more solid foundation for his power. It could also e.g., provide a consensus on the future of the agreement between the DRC and the USA. In August 2025, after high level consultations between CENCO-ECC and independent churches with the presidential chief of staff and advisors, an agreement was reached on the national dialogue. It was detailed in a press release from the Churches dated 25 August 2025.³⁸ However, the presidential ordinance necessary to start the process was not taken. It seems that the Presidency now rather plays on time to be able to postpone the 2028 elections.

5. WHAT IF THERE IS NO DIALOGUE?

President Tshisekedi’s project is no secret: to consolidate his power and the power of his community, he wants to extend his rule beyond the next elections, and for an indefinite period. In order to achieve a constitutional change or replacement, he needs either a military victory over M23 which will make him extremely popular, or else to apply repression and exclusion of all contrary opinions.

A real military victory seems unlikely considering the weakness of the FARDC army and the insufficiency of drone attacks, even if Tshisekedi seems to think it is possible. A withdrawal of the RDF under US pressure and an implosion of M23 seems more likely. If this is the case, the fundamental problems giving rise to recurrent conflict are not resolved. Without an efficient government army, and security focused on the personal protection of the president and his rule, Rwanda can start any rebellion up again in the future. The myriads of armed groups will claim compensation for their fight. The mining sector in the East will continue to be kept hostage by political and military predators on both sides of the border. Communities will not go through a reconciliation process and there might easily occur violent actions of revenge against any community or group perceived to be allied with M23/AFC. Until now, President Tshisekedi has followed a path of antagonism rather than reconciliation inside the country. It is unsure whether he will be able to change course when the war will be over and introduce a necessary spirit of unity and reconciliation, accompanied by a reconstruction of efficient state presence in East-Congo.



6. CONCLUSION

Lessons from past dialogues, round tables and negotiations highlight the limited implementation of most peace agreements or settlements once the conflict is over, especially provisions related to governance and local reconciliation. In most instances, one or several of the parties try to get the upper hand again, laying the groundwork for a next conflict. If a comparable situation is to be avoided, a peace settlement cannot be limited to an ordinary ceasefire and demobilization/reintegration program for the M23/AFC, and the more fundamental causes of the recurrent conflict must be addressed. These causes are compounded by the governance and legitimacy problems of the Kinshasa government.

A comprehensive dialogue addressing the various levels of causes creating the recurrent conflicts in the East and the more general crisis in the country seems necessary to find a durable solution. This dialogue can be the start of a longer-term and phased process, according to the model of the “social pact” advocated by the CENCO-ECC initiative. It will have to be led by an independent institution with the necessary moral authority to keep orienting the participants towards the real interests of the DRC population. In a country where religion is fundamental for public action, the CENCO-ECC with a proven concern for these interests throughout its history, a presence all over the country and an elevated level of competence is the natural candidate. A coherent and broad-based position of the DR Congo will provide the country with a strong tool to advocate efficiently at the regional level and confront the expansionist policies of Rwanda and Uganda.

Two elements are crucial: a concern between all participants in a dialogue for national unity and the well-being of the population, and regional and international pressure (as proven by past experiences). Angola is crucial in the process and there is a certain support in the USA for a [credible national dialogue](#).³⁹

Still, despite efforts from Angola and the African Union mediation team, the perspective for this to happen is currently weak to the benefit of the pursuit of political and military dominance.

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Endnotes

- 1 A useful overview in Rigobert Minani Bihuzo s.j., *Les chances de réussite des multiples initiatives de paix en cours en RDC*, Congo-Afrique (Kinshasa), n. 596, p. 579-589, juin-juillet-août 2025.
- 2 *Feuille de route conjointe des activités relatives au rapatriement en République Démocratique du Congo des combattants ex-M23 présents en République du Rwanda*, Kigali, le 28 octobre 2019.
- 3 Claude Ibalanky's dealings with M23 embarrass Tshisekedi administration, in Africa Intelligence, 15 November 2022.
- 4 Minani Bihuzo, op.cit., p. 579-580.
- 5 <https://www.state.gov/peace-agreement-between-the-democratic-republic-of-the-congo-and-the-republic-of-rwanda/>
- 6 *The Doha Framework for a comprehensive peace agreement between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Alliance Fleuve Congo/ March 23 Movement (AFC/M23)*, 15 11 2025 (https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/45656-doc-2025.11.15_-_SIGNED_Framework_Peace_Agreement_EN.pdf).
- 7 About Territorial and Public administration, army, and security service reform, voting system and economic reforms.
- 8 Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, de la Coopération, de l'Intégration Africaine et des Togolais de l'Extérieur, *Communiqué final de la réunion de haut niveau sur la cohérence et la consolidation du processus de paix en République Démocratique du Congo et dans la région des grands lacs*, 19 01 2026 (<https://diplomatie.gouv.tg/communiqué-final-de-la-reunion-de-haut-niveau-sur-la-coherence-et-la-consolidation-du-processus-de-paix-en-republique-democratique-du-congo-et-dans-la-region-des-grands-lacs/>)
- 9 Diplomatic sources in Togo.
- 10 See <https://www.state.gov/releases/office-of-the-spokesperson/2026/03/joint-statement-from-the-international-contact-group-for-the-great-lakes-icg-on-the-situation-in-the-eastern-democratic-republic-of-the-congo-drc/>.
- 11 Angolan sources in Brussels.
- 12 Diplomatic sources.
- 13 See Rigobert Minani s.j., *L'accord-cadre d'Addis Ababa: vers un échec prévisible ?* in Congo-Afrique, n. 490, Décembre 2014, p. 831-843.
- 14 *Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region*, preamble para 5 (https://au.int/sites/default/files/newsevents/workingdocuments/26613-wd-drc_framework_agreement_eng.pdf)
- 15 <https://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/tea/news/east-africa/m23-claim-failed-drone-attack-on-kisangani-airport-5348070>
- 16 <https://acp.cd/anglais/drc-us-economic-partnership-meeting-held-in-washington-to-unify-common-interests/>
- 17 *The outlines of Kinshasa and Washington's Security Rapprochement*, Africa Intelligence, 20 February 2026.
- 18 See Erik Kennes, *What's Wrong with the DRC Constitution?*, Egmont Paper 128, December 2024 (https://egmontinstitute.be/app/uploads/2024/12/Erik-Kennes_Paper_128.pdf?type=pdf).
- 19 MOE CENCO-ECC RDC, *Rapport final d'observation électorale en République Démocratique du Congo 2019-2023*, juin 2024, p. 14-17.
- 20 The "Convention Démocratique du Parti" is the party's "parliament" but without decision-making power (UDPS Statutes, 25 January 2013, art. 30-34) which remains with the UDPS president.
- 21 Interviews with UDPS officials in Kinshasa, October 2025. The youth section of the UDPS party includes a myriad of formal and informal movements called "Parlementaires Debout," "Forces du Progrès" etc. They are bands of often violent militants used by party officials to attack adversaries or to exercise repression. Many jobless youth or street gangs (called "kuluna") joined these movements.
- 22 JUSTICE ET PAIX CONGO/CENCO, *Observation des élections présidentielle, législatives nationales et provinciales du 30 décembre 2018 en République Démocratique du Congo. Rapport intermédiaire*. Janvier 2019, p. 14.
- 23 Interview with the First Deputy President of the DRC National Assembly, Kinshasa, 23 February 2026.
- 24 "Commission Electorale Nationale Indépendante" or "National Independent Electoral Commission" organizing the elections in DR Congo.
- 25 Elements from a conversation with one of the negotiators for M23/AFC in Doha, 3 March 2026.
- 26 Impressions from several visits to Kinshasa, 2025-2026.
- 27 <https://www.jeuneafrique.com/1731686/politique/sauvons-la-rdc-a-nairobi-joseph-kabila-se-reve-en-rassembleur-dune-opposition-fragmentee/>
- 28 Cf. Communiqué de presse EciDé, 6 March 2026 (N.B. EciDé is the political party of Fayulu)
- 29 President Tshisekedi himself is an adept of the "Philadelphia Missionary Center" (Centre Missionnaire Philadelphie), a local protestant church in RDC.
- 30 See Rigobert Minani Bihuzo, s.j., *Les défis de la construction de la paix en République Démocratique du Congo et l'engagement de l'Eglise*, Ed. CEPAS, Kinshasa, 2021, p. 313-378.
- 31 See <https://web.archive.org/web/20260131095511/https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/congo-democratic-republic-of-the-factsheets/#people-and-society> (consulted 09 03 2026)
- 32 <https://infos.cd/actualite/societe/religion-la-rdc-compte-55-millions-de-catholiques/57433/>
- 33 <https://regardsprotestants.com/actualites/francophonie/les-protestants-de-plus-en-plus-nombreux-en-rdc/>
- 34 See <https://cencordc.org/index.php/actualites/486-guide-du-pacte-social-pour-la-paix-en-rdc>.
- 35 Rigobert Minani, s.j., op. cit., p. 184-188
- 36 *Pacte social pour la paix et le bien-vivre ensemble en RDC et dans les Grands Lacs. Comprendre sa pertinence conceptuelle, sa portée stratégique et sa nécessité historique*, Memorandum de clarification sur les fondements et les paradigmes de mise en œuvre du Pacte Social, Secrétariat du Pacte Social, février 2026, p. 7-8.
- 37 Personal communication from the "Social Pact" General Coordinator.
- 38 Communiqué des confessions religieuses sur le processus national et inclusif de paix en République Démocratique du Congo, Kinshasa, 25 August 2025.
- 39 Diplomatic sources.



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