



Situation Report

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Democratic Republic of Congo Update: A second round of elections?

- 1. Introduction.** The Democratic Republic of Congo's first democratic elections in 40 years have just been completed. The elections were peaceful, transparent, credible and well managed, according to the overall impression from observation teams, including those from the Carter Center, the European Union, South Africa and the international community. The run-up to the elections was marred by violence in the capital city, Kinshasa, and ongoing conflict in the Ituri area, where Peter Karim's militia attacked civilians, *Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo* (FARDC) and the United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUC). Karim did agree to demobilise two weeks before the elections, a step that brought stability to the area. The only violence reported on Election Day was in Mbuji-Mayi (Kasaï province), where supporters of Etienne Tshisekedi of the *Union for Democracy and Social Progress* (UDPS) forced some polling stations to close on 30 July and reopen on 31 July. The biggest challenge now is to complete the counting process. Electoral officials must process votes coming from 1,400 voting stations at 62 compilation centres. The final results are expected on about two weeks time. Partial results have already been announced and according to international observers this could again stir up tensions. This situation report will address the general situation on Election Day, the electoral calendar after Election Day, the security situation, and possible scenarios once the results have been made public.
- 2. Elections.** Contrary to some predictions by some national and international NGO'S, the election on 30 July 2006 was carried out with very few incidents of violence. Most of the problems were logistical in nature and were solved by the *Commission Electorale Indépendante* (CEI) and MONUC. The only violence on Election Day was in Mbuji-Mayi, where polling stations were set on fire and voting was extended to the next day. Voter turnout in the east was very high, at 90% and higher, with a large number of votes for Joseph Kabila who did participate as an independent candidate. The turnout in the western part of the country was estimated to be between 60% and 90%. A high percentage of votes in the west were cast for Jean-Pierre Bemba of the *Mouvement de Liberation du Congo* (MLC). The first vote counting took place as planned, with the polling stations becoming counting stations after the polls closed. The ballot papers were then transported from 1,400 polling stations to 62 compilation centres for verification and capturing on the CEI's computer system. After that, the votes were all transported to the provincial offices of the CEI. This is a very slow process and the CEI announced on 13 August that only 9.4% of the presidential results had been captured and

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verified. It is estimated by the CEI that the final results will be available on 20 August. The counting process is one of the risk factors the CEI must consider before declaring the final results credible. International observers have already expressed concerns about the counting process and possible irregularities. Remarks made by presidential candidates like Jean-Pierre Bemba and Azarias Ruberwa have also not helped to cool the political temperatures. Bemba has already announced that he won the election contrarily to the Electoral Law, and Ruberwa is already talking of voting irregularities. Mr William Swing, the United Nations Secretary-General's Special Representative, has asked the Congolese people to await the election results patiently and to accept the outcome.

- 3. Electoral Calendar.** The CEI has proposed a calendar for the next few weeks. The calendar assumes that the final election results will be known on 20 August. If a second round of voting is needed, it is scheduled to take place on 29 October. This date has also already been set for provincial elections. The newly elected provincial representatives will then elect provincial governors and 120 senators in early January 2007. If any of the presidential candidates gets more than 50% of the vote, the new president will assume office on 10 September. If a second round takes place, the new president will assume office on 10 December¹.
- 4. Security Situation.** The security arrangements for Election Day played a large part in ensuring a calm and peaceful election. Although there were threats of violence in Ituri, the Kivus, and Katanga, they did not materialise, mostly because MONUC's Eastern Division was successfully deployed in the problem areas. The Congolese police also did a good job of ensuring security at the voting stations on Election Day. However, in Ituri, North and South Kivu and Katanga provinces there is concern of the lack of security.

 - **Ituri.** The situation in Ituri was defused to a certain extent by an agreement reached just before the election with Peter Karim, the commander of *Front Nationaliste et Intégrationniste* (FNI). Karim's FNI was responsible for attacks on FARDC and MONUC, and had taken seven Nepalese soldiers hostage. Karim and his militia agreed to join the demobilisation process and released the Nepalese hostages. Not everybody in Ituri, national and international NGO's appreciated the circumstances of this agreement. The main threat in Ituri is still posed by the more than 15,000 militia members who have been disarmed and demobilised but not successfully integrated.
 - **North Kivu** The attack by General Laurent Nkunda has not yet been dealt with. Just after the election, General Nkunda attacked Sake, a small town in North Kivu, killing two government soldiers and wounding 14. This prompted the displacement of thousands of civilians. Also, two other militia groups, the Mai-Mai and the *Forces Démocratique de Liberation du Rwanda* (FDLR) continues to attack civilians in North Kivu province. The biggest concern is the slow pace of army integration and the unwillingness to integrate shown by the hardcore of the *ex-National Congolese Army* (ANC), the military wing of the RCD, and the Mai-Mai brigades.
 - **South Kivu.** FDLR rebels still roam around this province and their attacks on civilians pose the greatest threat. Elements of the Mai-Mai, and ex-National Congolese Army (the military wing of the *Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie* (RCD) not integrated into the FARDC are still a security problem.
 - **Katanga.** The Mai-Mai elements that are not yet integrated into FARDC are still a threat to stability in this province. The region between Pweto, Manono and Mitwaba has attracted particular attention and is also referred to as the 'triangle of death'. The situation was partly defused when Commander Gedeon and his wife surrendered to MONUC before the elections².

There is also a fear for public violence in the bigger cities such as Kinshasa, Goma, Bukavu, and Lubumbashi when the final results are made known and if some candidates are unhappy with the outcome. Such incidents are supposed to be policed by the Rapid Intervention Units of the Congolese police, the formed police units of MONUC, as well as some elements of the European Union Force.

5. Possible outcome of the Election. There are two possible scenarios: (1) one of the 33 candidates wins with more than 50% and becomes president; or (2) no candidate gets more than 50% of the vote and a second round is held in October 2006. At this early stage it is difficult to predict which scenario is most likely. The general feeling in Kinshasa among the media and political analysts are, however, that a second round is a possibility. These two scenarios could play out as follows:

▪ **One candidate wins more than 50% and becomes president.**

- If Mr Joseph Kabila acquires more than 50% and becomes president, there might be some negative reactions from both Jean-Pierre Bemba and Azarias Ruberwa, both of who have the capacity to restart the war again in the DRC. Ruberwa has already cried ‘foul’ (via the international media) even though final results are not yet known. Jean-Pierre Bemba seems very sure of winning the presidency and unconfirmed reports (from his campaign in Province Oriental) indicate that he will restart the war if he does not win. Bemba could also manipulate some armed groups and other dissatisfied politicians to disrupt political processes in the DRC. Unconfirmed reports indicate that Jean-Pierre Bemba has thousands of troops in Kinshasa and Equateur province, and he could also use soldiers loyal to General Nkunda in North Kivu if necessary. Bemba is also making the point that the international community would prefer Joseph Kabila to win in the first round because they fear Kabila would be likely to lose a second-round vote. A third presidential candidate, Oscar Kashala, has warned that foreign powers should not meddle in the DRC’s internal affairs.
- If Jean-Pierre Bemba wins the election in the first round, how will the eastern part of DRC react? This is an unknown factor, but may elicit calls for secession, opening the door for an intensification of conflict that will become more widespread.

How Etienne Tshisekedi, who did not take part in the elections, will react to the outcome of the elections is still unclear. We can anticipate that he may join forces with the opposition groups aligned to Bemba? The international community, MONUC, and the European Union Force in the DRC are ready to deal with spoilers and have warned they are willing to use force if needed. Who ever wins will have to think carefully on how to involve like Kashala, Ruberwa, etc.

- **No candidate get more than 50% and a second round are held.** If the present trend holds until the final ballot is counted, the main contenders for a second round are Joseph Kabila and Jean-Pierre Bemba. This support is geographically divided between the east and the west. If these two candidates are forced into a second round run-off, we are likely to see political alliances like never before. The possibility is that Jean-Pierre Bemba might rally all the opposition to support him and eliminate Joseph Kabila. However, from what we saw in the last campaign, Kabila was well organised and funded. With support from his campaign leader, Oliver Kamitatu, it is quite possible that he could rally the smaller political parties to win the second round. This sort of electioneering will possibly result in more conflict between opposition parties.

6. Possible political alliances during a second round of presidential elections. If we are to assume that scenario two holds, a runoff election will take place within the framework of two major alliances (This section assumes Joseph Kabila and Jean-Pierre Bemba are the candidates in the second round). Such an election will take place within the framework of two major alliances: the *Alliance for the Presidential Majority (AMP)*, and the *Tout Sauf Kabila (TSK)* (‘All against Kabila’ or ‘Anyone Except Kabila’).

- **Joseph Kabila’s Presidential Alliance.** The Alliance for the Presidential Majority, a political platform for 31 political parties and 26 political personalities not affiliated to political parties, was set up by Kabila’s *Parti du Peuple pour la Reconstruction et la Démocratie (PPRD)* in June 2006. The Alliance managed to

present over 2,500 candidates for the parliamentary elections. Its spokesman is Oliver Kamitatu, the former secretary general of Bemba's MLC and former chairman of the National Assembly. Other important defectors that have joined this coalition are the former minister of planning, Alexis Thambwe (ex-MLC) and the ex-RCD minister of state assets, Joseph Mudumbi. According to Article 4 of the Constitutional Act of the AMP, its objectives are:

- To reassemble and mobilize the Congolese men and women to maintain the patriotic flame and safeguard the territorial integrity;
- To work together in view of winning the presidential election and scrutiny in order to govern under the leadership of President Joseph Kabila³.

■ **The Tout Sauf Kabila (TSK) and Regroupement des Nationalistes Congolais (RENACO).**

– **The TSK.** If a second round of voting is to take place, Jean-Pierre Bemba's RENACO will likely form an alliance, with other political parties to form TSK. This Alliance's slogan will be, "Let us save Congo from the East-West partition". The envisioned alliance will include many political parties in the western and eastern parts of the DRC. This alliance, which is already being formed, will most likely include *Coalition des Démocrates Congolais (CODECO)* of Pay-Pay, the *Union pour Reconstruction du Congo (UREC)* of Dr Oscar Kashala, the 19 other presidential candidates, and signatories of a memorandum to start new negotiations on a political transition before the first presidential election on 30 July 2006, the "camp de la patrie" of Zahidi Ngoma, the RCD of Azarias Ruberwa, UDPS and a number of independent candidates.

– **Regroupement des Nationalistes Congolais (RENACO).** Jean Pierre Bemba's MLC entered the first round of voting with a major handicap: some of the most prominent MLC members had defected. They were Olivier Kamitatu, Alexis Thambwe, Valentin Senga, Simon Simene and Antoine Ghonda. However, the party still managed to register 435 candidates in all 11 provinces covering almost all 169 electoral districts during the first round of presidential elections. It was interesting to see that the party did manage to register candidates in Equateur province, outside its 'natural' link to the northwest of the DRC; the Equateur area is said to be 'MLC territory'. The party also managed to register a significant number of candidates in the eastern DRC. In Katanga, the MLC formed a regional alliance with RENACO, including Federalist forces like Lunda Bululu's *Rassemblement des Forces Sociales et Fédéralistes (RSF)*, and it is clear that the MLC intends to increase its influence in Kabila's stronghold

7. Conclusion. Whatever the outcome of the first round of elections, it is important that the results be credible and that the people of Congo accept the outcome. Any combination of the above scenarios could play out over the next few days and weeks. It is however important that all role players ensure that post-election events are held peacefully. The security forces, both the Congolese and the international actors, must be ready and willing to use force against any people or political groups seeking to spoil the process.

1 Great Lakes Centre for Strategic Studies Weekly News and Analysis, 4 August 2006.

2 Stephanie Wolters and Henri Boshoff. The Impact of slow military reform on the transition process in the DRC. Institute for Security Studies, Situation Report, 10 July 2006.

3 Interview with MONUC Political Officer, 22 April 2006, Kinshasa.