



CONGO AT WAR

**A Briefing on the Internal and External Players
in the Central African Conflict**

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I. INTRODUCTION

On 2 August 1998, barely 14 months after the end of the war initiated by the anti-Mobutu coalition, the emergence of a new armed movement announced the beginning of a further "war of liberation" in the Democratic Republic of Congo, this time against the regime of Laurent Désiré Kabila. The conflict arose out of differences between the founder members of the *Alliance des Forces Démocratiques pour la Libération du Congo* (Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo - ADFL), the coalition that installed Laurent Kabila at the head of the Congo in May 1997. There was dissension within the ADFL from the start of the movement as evidenced by various armed confrontations between the Rwandan-Ugandan grouping and the opposing Congolese-Angolan party.

The ADFL's 1997 victory only succeeded in quelling the movement's internal conflicts for a short time. In July 1998 the dismissal of the Rwandan contingent of the *Forces Armées Congolaises* (FAC – Congolese Armed Forces) served to accelerate an armed rebellion. Kabila's efforts since 1997 to free himself of his dependence on his former Ugandan and Rwandan sponsors threatened the security and economic interests of these two countries. In this context of reciprocal defiance, each camp sought to organise a new coalition by resorting to the formula that had already proved successful during the 1996-97 "war of liberation": calls for help from foreign troops.

The result was a series of heterogeneous alliances between different actors on the Congolese scene. Kabila's side intensified contacts that had already been initiated before the beginning of the rebellion with various armed groups in the east of Congo. This indicates that Kabila had early perceived the threat he might face and was seeking to adjust the military balance. Meetings were held mainly with the Mai-Mai, a cross-ethnic group that accordingly had formerly fought on Kabila's side against the refugees and the local population. However, Kabila probably also met with guerrillas from Rwanda (former FAR soldiers – Rwandan Armed Forces), Uganda (Allied Democratic Forces) and Burundi (FDD – Forces pour la Défense et de la Démocratie). In addition, he called for outside support, first of all from fellow-members of the SADC (South African Development Community). Zimbabwe, Namibia and Angola responded to his appeal by sending troops. Other African countries later followed suit: Libya, Chad and Sudan either sent troops or made financial contributions to the war effort.

Laurent Kabila has the support of civilians as well as soldiers. His popularity has increased considerably among the civilian population, which played an important role during the fighting in Kinshasa. Kabila and his colleagues have tapped on sensitive ethnic reflexes to win them over, even calling for the lynching of the "Tutsi invaders".

The unarmed opposition to Kabila, mainly Etienne Tshisekedi's *Union pour la Démocratie et le Progrès Social* (UDPS – Union for Democracy and Social Progress) stands between the two camps and is offering to act as a mediator.

On the rebel side, contacts continue between Kabila's Congolese opponents, who include Arthur Zaidi Ngoma, the person first nominated to lead the rebellion and based in Goma. FAC officers, a faction of the Banyamulenge leaders, and former Mobutists who were not "redeemed" under Kabila have formed a new political-military movement with the stated objective of establishing a new government in Kinshasa.

The rebellion in Congo: another war of liberation underway or a country becoming locked in endemic violence?

This recurrent war, launched from Kivu as was the case in 1996, differs from the preceding war in three essential respects: there are a large number of groups involved within the various anti-Kabila forces and they have simultaneously competing agendas; both these forces and their external allies have limited logistical capacities; the many guerrilla groups in the east of Congo are being reinforced and form shifting alliances with one or other of the forces present. This combination of factors, added to the fact that the country is now experiencing a second successive war within two years and a systematic recourse to armed force, serves to increase the risk of Congo fragmenting and makes probable the scenario of a country locked into endemic violence.

The wars follow on the seven years of organised chaos instigated by Mobutu to avoid holding elections called for by internal public opinion and the international community. These years proved highly destructive and brought Congo - potentially an economic giant - to its knees. However, its potential for great wealth remains and its resources are coveted not only by Europe and America, but also by other African countries, whether or not they are immediate neighbours. Different countries use different methods to exert their influence and grab their share of the booty, methods that vary from force to normal trade relations, and also include corrupting the country's leaders and manipulating ethnic groups. Neighbouring countries that have taken advantage of the disorder in Congo in order to get at the country's resources, are now finding that the disorder threatens to spread across their own borders.

The rebels forecast of a blitzkrieg has already been dismissed. If observers now incline towards the increasing probability of an extended war, this will very certainly prove disastrous for Congo and for the stability of the region in general. In addition, alliances are constantly evolving. It is doubtful whether the Angolans, presently Kabila's allies, will remain so for very long, or whether Namibia,

Zimbabwe and Uganda will be able to remain in Congo while their internal public opinion is hostile to that involvement. The United States' recent declaration of support for Kabila could also change the balance of force.

The war is becoming increasingly complicated. It already involves a large number of African countries, both at government level and in relation to the rebel groups, and is now in the process of developing into the first pan-african war.

The objective of this report is to look at the different players in this situation and try to understand why they became involved, whether or not they have the means to remain involved and what they hope to get out of their involvement.

II. PLAYERS ON THE CONGOLESE SIDE

1. THE REBEL MOVEMENT

A. The Banyamulenge Soldiers¹

On 27 July 1998 President Kabila announced that he was terminating “the Rwandan military presence that has assisted us since the liberation” of Congo. He added: “this marks the end of any foreign military presence in Congo.” It was this dismissal of the Rwandan contingent of the Congolese army that accelerated the launch of the armed rebel movement.

Now projected into the limelight, the Banyamulenge, the Congolese Tutsi, are an instrument of this rebellion rather than the initiators. However, their status in Congo has not significantly improved as a result of their involvement in the war and their leaders’ ambitions remained unsatisfied. Their right to Congolese nationality has always been contested and the strained relations with other ethnic groups generated a deep feeling of insecurity. Deteriorating relations with their former Rwandan allies further complicated their situation.

The fact that some Tutsis were singled out for favours In the aftermath of Laurent Kabila’s victory, (they were given leadership posts, including some never previously held by a Tutsi) only served to fuel the hostility of Kivu’s other ethnic groups. Tutsi involvement with the ADFL at the side of the Rwandans was seen as proof that Kivu Tutsi are Rwandan first and Congolese only second.

At the beginning of 1998, when Kabila’s regime tried to disperse the Banyamulenge soldiers throughout the Congolese army (FAC), they mutinied against being made to serve alongside former soldiers of Mobutu’s Zairean army (*Forces Armées Zaïroises* - FAZ), now incorporated into the FAC. It was fear of FAZ threats in 1996 that led the Banyamulenge to rebel in September of that year and launch the “war of liberation”. Only the mediation efforts of James Kabaréré (alias James Kabaré), a Ugandan-Rwandan who was then the FAC Chief of Staff, succeeded in calming the situation at that time. For the Banyamulenge soldiers the departure of the Rwandans in July 1998 indicated that the consensus no longer held and they felt themselves to be again under threat.

At the same time relations between the Rwandans and the Banyamulenge deteriorated significantly. Let down by Kabila and with their community increasingly isolated, the Banyamulenge tried to start a dialogue with neighbouring ethnic communities. However, their discontent continued to grow, as did the gulf between them and Kivu’s other ethnic groups as a result of the constant military incursions into the region from Rwanda. Many

¹ “Those from Mulenge”; singular: Munyamulenge. Usually referred to as the Tutsi of South Kivu, but the designation is now often extended to include the Tutsi of both Kivus.

Congolese Tutsi would have liked to give negotiations with other ethnic communities a chance, but this evidence of Kigali's policy of repression meant that this was not an option for them.

The extent of the mutual mistrust and fear also led them to a *rapprochement* with the Burundian government in an attempt to ensure their security, and to create their own anti-Kabila political movement, the Republican Federalist Forces.

On their side, the Burundians saw this as a chance to gain a double advantage. They would be able to secure the main route used to bypass the embargo via South Kivu, and to contain the regional ambitions of Rwanda and Uganda.

The biggest losers in the rebellion so far seem to be the Banyamulenge, and the Congolese Tutsi in general, a large number of whom feel they are being used by Rwanda to defend that country's cause. If the present war results in the failure of the rebellion, the question will arise as to how the Congolese Tutsi can hope to continue living in Congo. And if it succeeds, their main problem will be to find a *modus vivendi* with the Congolese, the majority of whom reject Rwandans and all those assimilated to them. In either case the Kivu Tutsi will live in a state of insecurity.

This second rebellion has seen a particularly high death rate among the young Kivu Tutsi who followed Bizima, Bugera and Nyarugabo to Kinshasa during the period of their alliance with Kabila, but who did not join in their later flight. On 13 August 1998, a French-language text issuing from a meeting in Bukavu of Banyamulenge representatives of a movement called the "Campaign for peace, democracy and development" condemned this flight from Kinshasa by the Banyamulenge elite at the end of July. The text accused them of "abandoning their security guards" and leaving them to be killed, and of "repeating the same treason by shamelessly (sic) claiming responsibility for the second revolution and/or liberation." In Kinyarwanda was added the words: "If Kinshasa falls soon, what traitor would accept a leadership role and show contempt for blood of the brave men they have publicly betrayed?" The text also proposes: "let us seek together for peaceful solutions to our problems without forgetting the other tribes in Kivu."

B. Soldiers of the Congolese Armed Forces (FAC)

A large number of these troops were formerly members of Mobutu's FAZ. In fact, they are unusual among FAC soldiers in that they received a conventional military training, in contrast to the "*kadogos*"². Even if they are part of an undisciplined army, military specialists reckon that if well led and paid regularly, they could constitute a force to be reckoned with.

However, by July 1998, as under Mobutu in 1996, these soldiers had not been paid for several months. In 1996, they refused to fight for Mobutu; in

² Young people recruited by Kabila during the "war of liberation".

1998 they quickly rallied to the call to rebellion issued by Major Jean-Pierre Ondekane, one of their own men. Ondekane met no resistance in any town in Kivu, and not very much in Kitona, their base in Bas Congo province.

C. Civilians

(i) RCD

A number of civilians have joined forces to form the *Rassemblement congolais pour la démocratie* (RCD - Congolese Assembly for Democracy), which brings together quite disparate groups around a core that could be called "the disillusioned of the first liberation". The RCD includes the following:

- Bizima Karaha (a Tutsi from South Kivu), formerly Minister of Foreign Affairs under Kabila and holding the same post with the RCD;
- Shambuyi Kalala (Kasai), formerly in charge of propaganda for the ADFL (Kabila's party) and holding the same post with the RCD;
- Emile Ilunga (Katanga), who wanted to be president of the political wing of the Katangan Tigers and resented being removed from power by Kabila after the May 1997 victory; he is now "Minister" in charge of health and social affairs with the RCD;
- Moïse Nyarugabo (a Tutsi from South Kivu), formerly Kabila's private secretary and now Vice-President of the RCD;
- Deogratias Bugera (a Tutsi from North Kivu), formerly Secretary-General of the ADFL and, along with Kabila³, the only remaining founder of the ADFL still holding office. Kabila tried hard to undermine him before sidelining him in June 1998. At the moment Bugera prefers not to appear on the RCD's organisation chart, but his presence has been confirmed by several sources.

The importance of the "disillusioned" to the rebellion is such that it was once suggested that the movement should be known as the "ADFL-Bis". This would have been as a clear indication of its intention to reconstitute the 1997 "revolution" as they now see Laurent Kabila as a traitor. The suggestion was finally dropped out of fear that the new party would be too closely identified with the failures and abuses of the ADFL itself. It should also be pointed out that many of the "disillusioned" received special favours from Kabila although they had not joined in the fighting and were neither members of his tribe nor fellow combatants throughout the years of the guerrilla war (1960-1986). Now that the Rwandans have been chased out, they may become the regime's next scapegoats as they are not established politicians and generally have no political base in Congolese society (except for Bugera).

³ Of the two other founders, Kisase Ngandu was assassinated in January 1997 and Masasu Nindaga was arrested at the end of 1997.

(ii) *Members of the Former Regime*

The following are the main figures:

- Arthur Zahidi Ngoma, the first co-ordinator of the movement, a lawyer who has always worked in the field of human rights; an opponent of Mobutu and Kabila, in exile for a long time, he recently spent several months in prison (November 1997 to May 1998) after giving a press conference in Kinshasa on behalf of his party;
- Wamba dia Wamba, professor of history living in Tanzania and a specialist in regard to the concepts of African democracy and reconciliation (and worked with Julius Nyerere on the Burundian peace process) and was elected to head the RCD.

The frequent changes in the movement's leadership make it doubtful whether these individuals are truly representative or even popular among members of the rebel movement. This view is supported by Ngoma's erratic progress within the RCD: first appointed as co-ordinator, but not even mentioned in the party's organisation chart in mid-August 1998, he was then re-established as "Vice-President" and sent to negotiate in Victoria Falls at the beginning of September.

Alexis Tambwé is another figure from the former regime. Together with Kengo wa Dondo, this former Director of Customs founded and presided over the *Union des démocrates indépendants* (UDI - Union of Independent Democrats) and acted as Kengo's Minister for Transport and Communications. Tambwé had previously held office in the Tshisekedi, "government" when the latter was refusing to accept Mobutu's appointment of Faustin Birindwa as Prime Minister. In exile in Belgium since Kabila's victory, Alexis Tambwé was one of a group of former Mobutu supporters whose holdings in Brussels were seized by Kinshasa. He is currently a member of the steering committee of the RCD.

Lunda Bululu, a Katangan, was Mobutu's Prime Minister in May 1990 and Kengo's Minister of Foreign Affairs as from mid-1994. He is currently co-ordinator of the RCD's board of directors, with functions corresponding to those of a prime minister.

2. THE CONGOLESE GOVERNMENT

A. *The Armed Forces*

Although the Congolese government can rely on those troops that did not defect, it has been generally remarked that the rebels were amazingly successful prior to the military intervention in support of Kabila by Angola, Zimbabwe and Namibia. Even during the October 1996 ADFL offensive the rebels had large-scale support from Rwandan and Ugandan troops. But two further factors played a role. On the one hand, Kabila's FAC offered even less resistance to the insurrection than had Mobutu's FAZ two years earlier. On the

other hand, it must be remembered that the FAC was led by Rwandan officers after Kabila's victory in May 1997 so they are very well aware of all its weak points.

(i) *The Katangan Tigers*

The main body of the so-called Katangan Tigers has remained faithful to Kabila. The Tigers were originally formed by Moïse Tshombé's former Katangan gendarmes who went into exile with their families in Angola in the 1960s to escape repression under Mobutu, and their children who grew up in Angola. Some of the latter group later formed an elite corps of soldiers within the MPLA (People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola)⁴. A large number of these Katangan-Angolan soldiers have been demobilised over recent years under the Angolan peace process.

During the first "war of liberation" (1996-97) around 2,000 Tigers intervened on behalf of Kabila. This intervention took place a few months after the beginning of the insurrection and marked a decisive point in the conflict. According to some information, however, a number of Angolan soldiers fighting with the Tigers later returned home.

How many Tigers support Kabila today?

It is known that the Tigers military leadership has been divided and that two different political wings claimed to represent the movement when the rebellion broke out in 1998.

- One wing is led from Angola by Henri Mukatshung Mwambu, Secretary-General of the FLNC (*Front de Libération National du Congo* - Front for the National Liberation of Congo, which fought in the two "Shaba wars" in 1977 and 1978). He returned to Kinshasa after Laurent Kabila's victory and has supposedly joined the main faction of Tigers, themselves faithful to the movement's number two, General "Mufu" Vindicien Kiyana.
- The other wing is led from Brussels by Dr. Emile Ilunga, President of the National Council for the Resistance, which regards itself as the political wing of the FLNC. A former representative in Brussels of the PRP (*Parti de la révolution populaire* - Party of the People's Revolution, founded by Laurent Kabila in 1968), Dr. Ilunga later fell out with Kabila. He is very close to General Jean Delphin Muland (or Mulanda), nominal head of the Katangan Tigers, whose inability to conclude an agreement with Kabila before the May 1997 victory resulted in his imprisonment in Lubumbashi, together with around twenty of his officers and several dozen soldiers. He remained there for many months before being placed under house arrest.

⁴ The Katangan Tigers now include Angolan soldiers, some still active former Katangan gendarmes and Katangan civilians in exile in Angola.

In this new war of liberation, however, the dissension between the two Tiger groups has been erased. Although Dr. Ilunga has joined the rebellion in Goma, his companions affirm that he is acting on his own and in his own name, whereas they are rallying to the side of Kabila in the face of the Rwandan-Ugandan intervention.

(ii) *Former FAZ Soldiers*

Apart from the Katangan troops, Kabila's army is now also composed of "kadogos", and former FAZ soldiers whose national sentiment was aroused by the presence of Ugandan and Rwandan troops at the side of the rebels.

(iii) *People's Militia Groups*

A final force must be included, one that is more difficult to control than all the others: the people's militia groups, known as the *Défense civile et populaire* (People's Civil Defence). President Kabila himself encouraged the creation of this movement: "People in the villages must take up arms, traditional weapons, arrows and spears, to crush the enemy or we will become slaves of the Tutsi." (25 August 1998).

After the rebel attack against Kinshasa at the end of August 1998, and the lynchings of presumed rebels that followed, calm seemed to return to the Congolese capital. But the situation remained very tense as it was feared that many of the rebels who had infiltrated the city were still present. Consequently, at the beginning of September, "peoples" roadblocks were set up, manned mainly by young people, who "took charge" of checking identities. This indicates the level of hostility felt by the people of Kinshasa towards the rebels, provoked mainly by electricity and water cuts (making survival even more precarious for the very poor) and price rises resulting from fighting in the west of Congo that cut the capital's supply routes. These militia groups are extremely dangerous because they are difficult to control and perfectly capable of carrying out systematic lynchings.

The Kinshasa authorities have played on and actively encouraged the anti-Tutsi feelings that developed in Kinshasa during the year that the Rwandan army was involved in running the "new Congo", when the population suffered real abuse at the hands of Rwandan soldiers. All this has led to an atmosphere of anti-Tutsi hysteria in the capital not dissimilar to that reigning in Rwanda before the 1994 genocide.

Some Congolese politicians today speak malevolently of the Tutsi, referring to them as "vermin", "unclean", "worms", "vampires", and call for their extermination. Some even predict it, as did Dominique Sakombi Inongo, Kabila's communications adviser: "To the Tutsi (...) I announce the time of perdition has come, of atonement, of eternal exile, of great

hardships and even greater torment.”⁵This form of abuse is even more dangerous given that it is encouraged by popularity-seeking authorities and passed of as patriotism in a time of war.

B. Civilians

(i) The Katangans

To an even greater extent than Mobutu, President Kabila has relied on the support of his own ethnic group, the Baluba of Katanga⁶, and to a lesser degree on other Katangans. His regime has successfully employed nepotism and tribalism in order to secure support, especially among the Katangans of Kinshasa whose loyalty he particularly wished to ensure. As a result, they can be considered some of the strongest civilian supporters of his government.

This doubtless explains why President Kabila was not popular – before this second war – in Lubumbashi, capital of Katanga (“the copper province”). Lubumbashi is situated in the south of the province in a region dominated by ethnic groups other than the Baluba who did not appreciate the fact that the head of state ruled “only with his brothers”. However, at the beginning of 1998 South Katangan intellectuals discovered that Kabila’s mother was a Lunda from Kapanga, i.e. one of their own. This seems to have put a brake on the principal intra-Katangan rivalry (the south against the north, “authentic” Katangans against the Balubakat).

An anti-Kabila Katangan source has pointed out that Kabila’s father and paternal grandfather all originate from Manowo, as does Kabila himself.⁷

⁵ *Soft International*, 24 August 1998.

⁶ Known as the “Balubakat”, installed in North Katanga, they feel no solidarity with the Baluba of Kasai.

⁷ Other personalities from Manowo include:

- Joseph Kabila, the President’s son, Chief of Staff of the army.
- Célestin Kifwa, Kabila’s brother-in-law, head of the police.
- Gaëtan Kakudji, Kabila’s cousin, number two in the government and Minister of State with responsibility for the interior.
- Kyungu wa Kumwanza, governor of Katanga under Mobutu, he shares responsibility for the systematic massacres against the people of Kasai (1992). Today he is President Kabila’s adviser. Bizima Karaha, the former Minister of Foreign Affairs, was opposed to his nomination as ambassador to Kenya.
- Jean-Claude Masangu, governor of the central bank.
- Mwenze Kongolo, Minister of Justice.

Like his paternal grandmother, the following Balubakats from Kabalo have also been appointed to important posts.

- Séverin Kabwé, head of the national security agency (victim of an attack in October 1997, he is receiving treatment in South Africa).
- Umba Kyamitala, president of Gécamines under Mobutu, he was appointed Kabila’s adviser on metallurgical matters, and then minister in charge of strategic development zones. His wife is from Manono.
- Me Mbuyu Lunyongolo, president of the Lubumbashi human rights committee under Mobutu, nominated as director to the cabinet of the Minister of Justice at the beginning of 1998 and

However, the ethnic violence is difficult to suppress and if Kabila remains in power in Kinshasa, another scapegoat will have to be found. Will it be the Katangans, the Kasaians, those suspected of being former Mobutist supporters or the people of Equator province? The Katangans presently monopolise power thanks to Kabila's cronyism. However, at the beginning of September 1998 the Kinshasa press was encouraging President Kabila to "free himself from his Katangan brothers". The Katangans conducted systematic massacres against the Kasaiens in 1992 and there remains a strong rivalry between them today. Some supposed Mobutists have joined the rebels, and the people of Equator were the previous favourites of former President Mobutu, who came from there.

(ii) *Kabila's Supporters*

Kabila had the support of a part of the Congolese population before the rebellion began because a certain amount of progress had been made under his administration. There was remarkably unanimous support among Kinshasa's poor who appreciated the improved security in their daily lives, particularly the fact that they were no longer abused by soldiers as happened under Mobutu. In the working class neighbourhoods of the capital last May people were often heard to say: "Now we are free, free to move round" without fear of extortion.

The well off there also appreciated the improved security, but for them there was less contrast between the Mobutu and Kabila regimes. Under Mobutu they could pay for military protection. Under Kabila, soldiers or civilian authorities (or their relatives) could steal from them and confiscate houses and cars.

However, the security gains under Kabila's regime were really only visible in the capital. In the provincial cities such as Lubumbashi (Katanga) and Kananga (Eastern Kasai) – nothing has changed. The troops there remained practically the same and although Kabila installed new leaders, they appear unable to impose discipline.

In Kivu the situation was even worse (and remains so). The region has not really experienced peace since the beginning of the first insurrection

then adviser to the President, married to one of Kabila's relatives, nominated chargé d'affaires in Brussels replacing Ambassador Justine Kasa-Vubu.

- Me Luhonge Kabinda Ngoy, State Prosecutor.

The following appointees originally come from Kapanga, as does Kabila's mother, and are not Balubakats.

"Monsieur Georges", Kabila's half-brother, manager of ANR-Katanga and the real power in that province.

- Henri Mova Sakanyi, Minister of Transport.
- Mutomb Tshibal, Secretary-General of the ADFL (the only party allowed).

The following are also Katangans:

- Prosper Kibwé, Minister of Finance (his ethnic group is not given).
- Frédéric Kibassa Maliba, Minister for Mines (Musanga, South Katanga).

in September 1996. The Kivu tribes that do not speak Kinyarwanda (the language of both Hutu and Tutsi) are organised into various militias that ally themselves, when their interests coincide, with extremist Rwandan Hutu militias to attack both the Tutsi population and Rwandan soldiers. The RPA (Rwandan Patriotic Army) soldiers, penetrates Congolese territory regularly in pursuit of the Hutu militias and former FAR attacking Congolese villages that Hutu militiamen had passed through.

Finally, it must be noted that the security gains registered in Kinshasa under Kabila's regime have practically disappeared since the second insurrection, particularly since the rebel attack on the capital at the end of August that led to numerous lynchings of presumed rebels and the organisation of neighbourhood militias.

There were other gains under Kabila's regime, but they are of less importance in the eyes of the population. These include price stability (but there is not enough money in circulation); the restoration of order at Ndjili airport (Kinshasa); drains cleared and markets cleaned up in the main cities, improvements in public areas and the population encouraged to fill in potholes in the streets. These achievements have been greatly threatened by the war.

(iii) *Former Opponents of Kabila*

A large number of Congolese who were previously hostile to Kabila's regime rallied to his support when their nationalist sentiments were aroused against the involvement of foreigners in the rebellion. It is difficult to determine how many Congolese are simply hostile to any foreign presence, and how many combine their hostility with exasperation at the lack of improvement in their standard of living, which they express in anti-Tutsi racism. It is also clear that Rwandan support for the rebels has considerably strengthened Kabila's popularity both among people who were already backing him and among others who had previously been critical.

3. THE NEUTRAL FORCES

These are composed mainly of the political parties banned under Kabila's regime, particularly the *Union pour la démocratie et le progrès social* (Union for Democracy and Social Progress - UDPS) with its president, Etienne Tshisekedi.

The UDPS, as well as the *Parti démocrate-social chrétien* (Christian Social-Democratic Party - PDSC) – the two main parties together with Olengankoy's FONUS (*Forces Novatrices de l'Union Sacrée*) and the ADFL – favoured political negotiations rather than an armed rebellion. They sent representatives to the rebels to sound them out. Some, such as the National Congolese Movement/Lumumba (*Mouvement National Congolais/Lumumba*), have now joined the rebellion, while others are tempted to do so, but are hanging on for security reasons. Yet others are suspicious of the Rwandan role in the insurrection and do not want to be associated with it for that reason.

As for Etienne Tshisekedi, he has spoken publicly of “our compatriots from Goma”. This would infer that he does not agree with the government line that there is no rebellion, only a Ugandan-Rwandan invasion of the homeland.

All these neutral forces, no matter how close they are to the rebel side, hope to profit from the insurrection and claim the right to be involved in the multi-party negotiations that many are calling for, even those who have been involved in the violence. Until August 1998, such negotiations had been excluded by Kabila’s regime and there was no reason to believe that they might be possible in the near future. Now they seem to be the only reasonable solution arising from the rebellion.

III. FOREIGN PARTICIPANTS IN THE CONFLICT

1. RWANDA

A. Security Concerns and Involvement in the ADFL

The Rwandan government was confronted with a huge task in its attempts to rebuild Rwanda in the wake of the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi minority and the massacres of moderate Hutus. It has mainly pursued military tactics in the region where Hutu extremists continued to carry out lethal – and genocidal – attacks from the former Zaire where they found refuge and arms. At the beginning of 1998 Vice-President Kagame reckoned that the number of Hutu combatants then stood at 109,000, which is almost double the size of Habyarimana's army (FAR) and the extremist Hutu militias (Interhamwe) taken together before their exile in 1994.

In 1995 and 1996 the Tutsi of North Kivu, the province in which the majority of Hutu refugees in Zaire were installed, suffered massacres and ethnic cleansing, which Kinshasa did nothing to prevent. In 1996, when the anti-Tutsi ideology spread by the Hutu refugees started to become more virulent in South Kivu, the Tutsi of that province decided to take the initiative: they armed themselves and launched a rebellion in September 1996 with the complicity of Rwanda.

Indeed, Rwanda quickly intervened in the region on a large scale and supported the formation on 18 October 1996 of the *Alliance des forces démocratiques pour la libération du Congo-Zaïre* (Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire – ADFL) composed of four groups. The first represented Congolese Tutsi and was led by Déogratias Bugera; the second, the Lumumbists, was led by Kisase Ngandu; the third, a Marxist guerrilla group led by Laurent Kabila, no longer exists in the field; and the fourth, difficult to identify, was led by Anselme Masasu, a former Rwandan soldier. During the course of this “war of liberation”, Laurent Kabila succeeded in ousting his companions in arms (one of whom, Kisase Ngandu, was later assassinated) and took over the leadership of the movement.

At the beginning of 1997 the Katangan Tigers offered their assistance. According to some Katangan sources, their arrival influenced the decision taken by the ADFL's Rwandan sponsors that the aim would now be to overthrow Mobutu and not only to gain control of Kivu. As it progressed, the ADFL recruited young people from all the provinces. This necessarily meant a decline in the proportion of the ADFL troops originating from Kivu.

As from April 1997 clashes were reported between Tutsi (both Congolese and Rwandan) and “Congolese” (non-Tutsi) within the rebel army. Clashes between Tutsi and Katangans, the two best armed groups and the most seasoned among the ADFL troops, took a more violent turn in Goma. In the weeks that followed the rebellion moved from Goma (North Kivu) to Lubumbashi (Katanga).

Despite what had happened, Rwanda remained a favoured ally of Laurent Kabila. Although his name does not appear on the official organisation charts of the new regime, James Kabaré, a Rwandan soldier born in Uganda (head of the Republican Guard in Kigali in 1995) was first appointed military commander in Kinshasa and then Chief of Staff. Up to July 1998 Rwandan Tutsi soldiers assured security around Laurent Kabila. Others patrolled the streets of Kinshasa to maintain order.

B. Deterioration in the Relationship Between Rwanda and Kabila's Government

The installation of Rwandan soldiers in the opulent villas of the fleeing Mobutists (a practice adopted by all the new authorities) and the regular dispatch to Kigali of goods confiscated from these houses contributed towards the growing unpopularity of the Rwandans. Indeed, some Rwandan soldiers were assassinated in Kinshasa.

At the beginning of 1998, aware of its growing unpopularity and in need of its soldiers to oppose the Hutu rebel attacks from Congo (these have not ended despite the continuing presence of the Rwandan army in Kivu), the Kigali government recalled a large part of its troops from other parts of Congo. Only about 200 officers remained.

Relations between the former allies became increasingly strained from one week to the next. Kigali and Kampala did not hide their irritation with Kabila, who they saw as incapable of conducting a coherent policy in regard to commerce, thus preventing the economy from stabilising; incapable of creating a national consensus because he excludes all opponents from power, as well as those in favour of a regional or ethnic balance; incapable of preventing extremist Hutus and the Ugandan guerrillas of the Allied Democratic Forces (Islamic, and supported by Sudan) from attacking Rwanda and Uganda from Congo. However, it must be said that with a Rwandan at the head of the Congolese army Kabila had to leave the Rwandan army quite free to intervene in Kivu over the past year. Nonetheless, it did not achieve the expected results.

The rumours running rife in Kinshasa's corridors of power as from the beginning of June 1998 regarding the probable termination of James Kabaré's mandate were officially confirmed in mid-July. The Rwandan officer was replaced by Célestin Kifwa, a relative of President Kabila, and he became no more than an "adviser" to the Congolese army staff. On the evening of 27 July President Kabila called on all Rwandan troops to leave. Their officers left Kinshasa for Kigali the next day in an operation supervised by Célestin Kifwa.

Those Tutsi civilians who could afford to do so returned to Kigali, thus confirming Congolese opinion that the Tutsi are really "Rwandans, and not Congolese". Some Kivu Tutsi play on this ambivalence, sometimes presenting themselves as Rwandans, at other times as Congolese. This is a method of survival practiced by a population accustomed to systematic massacres – but other Congolese see it as a betrayal.

C. The Motivations Behind Rwanda's Involvement in the War Against Kabila

Security issues and the threat to the Tutsi

When the rebellion broke out on 2 August, Uganda publicly acknowledged its support for the rebels, while Rwanda denied any involvement. However, Kigali made several announcements that it would enter the war against Kinshasa because of the massacres of Tutsi in the Congolese capital and the arrests, followed by massacres, of Tutsi in several other cities (Kinshasa, Lubumbashi, Kisangani). These massacres and the "threats of genocide" with the complicity of the Congolese authorities provided an *a posteriori* diplomatic justification for the presence of Rwandan-Ugandan troops in Congo.

According to a rebel source, the involvement of Hutu extremists within the ranks of the FAC is one factor in the crisis. Although independent photographers have distributed pictures of Hutu soldiers taken prisoner by the rebels in Kisangani after the beginning of the rebellion, it is not known when they began to be recruited into Kabila's army.

Kabila's reliance on Hutu soldiers and the calls to kill Tutsi (end August) are responsible for the defensive ethnic reflex that could be observed during previous massacres. As a result, the Tutsi in Rwanda, Congo, Burundi and Uganda have put aside their differences to join in opposing an aggression that they know from experience may target them all, disregarding the real subject of dispute.

The hostility towards Kabila shown by the different Congolese parties is for the moment incorporated into the agendas of both Kampala and Kigali. For both these governments, the destruction of rebel rear bases in North Kivu is of the utmost priority, both militarily and politically. The increasing number of ADF operations in South-west Uganda is also of crucial political importance internally. And the deteriorating security situation in Rwanda emphasises the need to cut off support from North Kivu for its own particularly bloody guerrilla war. However, as the weakened guerrilla supporters of the former FAR in South Kivu have been dispersed and pushed far back from Rwanda's borders, this region no longer poses a basic security risk.

Rwanda's leaders believe that it is vitally important that the Hutu guerrillas are defeated because of the strongly ethnic turn that the confrontation with Kabila has taken. It is therefore quite likely that it will be more difficult for Kigali to renounce its objectives than either Kampala or Luanda. It is clear that the Rwandan army badly calculated the potential of an Angolan-Zimbabwean offensive. During the first week of September this mainly took the form of aerial bombardments that allowed the government camp to re-take rebel positions in the west of Congo. The Rwandan army has let it be known that if this type of war is also waged in the east of Congo, with the same positive results for the pro-Kabila alliance, the Ugandans and Rwandans are ready to conduct a guerrilla war.

The economic stakes

Control of Kivu's economic potential constitutes a recurrent objective that might become a reality if Rwanda can achieve lasting military influence in the region. Since the outbreak of the ADFL war, Kigali has been hoping to gain control over Kivu's resources and thus make the country independent of international donors. Mineral resources, mainly gold in North Kivu, could quickly generate income. However, Kivu's economy is in an extreme state of decay, which considerably reduces Kigali's chances of realising this potential.

Apart from the lack of economic and transport infrastructure and administrative resources to manage the population, the readiness of Kivu's inhabitants to express anti-Tutsi sentiments and fear of their neighbours' regional ambitions are all significant constraints on the realisation of Kigali's and Kampala's objectives. Their future economic influence in Kivu, and any lasting improvement in their security situations, will depend on their ability to allay these resentments.

The Kampala government holds a potential advantage in regard to the commercial and ethnic cross-border connections between North Kivu and the west of Uganda. If hostility against Uganda increases, however, this could encourage the development of the armed groups to which Kabila has been looking for support for several months.

2. UGANDA

Overall, Uganda has taken the same position as the Rwandans in this war, but its importance for Kampala does not arise out of purely security reasons as is the case for the Kigali government in North Kivu.

Nonetheless, Kampala has solid grounds for criticising Kabila's regime. The latter has shown itself incapable of preventing murderous attacks from within its territory by the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), one of the three anti-Museveni guerrilla movements in Uganda. The ADF is financed by Sudan (see below). In September 1998 President Museveni revealed that he had taken control of the main airports in East Congo in order to prevent Sudan from using them against Uganda. Museveni is demanding guarantees from Kinshasa that Sudan, and the guerrilla movements, will be prevented from attacking Uganda from Congo.

As in Rwanda and Angola, the defence budget constitutes a priority for Uganda. However, both Rwanda and Uganda have practically no air power, although Uganda does have ground-to-air missiles that have brought down several planes belonging to the pro-Kabila coalition.

The military authorities in Kampala must, however, face a public that is increasingly concerned by the possible consequences of Uganda's involvement in the war in Congo. The press became indignant when the defence budget of 150 million dollars approved by parliament was suddenly raised to 350 million dollars. Some economists claimed that the war has led to considerable reductions in commercial trade with Congo. However, it is not certain that

opposition to the war would be maintained if Uganda were able to finance a long-term conflict by using wealth removed from Congo.

Ugandan troops have been present on Congolese territory for some time now. They justify this presence by a security agreement concluded with Kabila's government. It seems that elements of these troops have also been involved in Congo's mineral trade, particularly around Kisangani, which is very far from the border with Uganda.

Minerals would also seem to be the key to a flight by a private plane that crashed on 25 September between Uganda and Congo. General Jet Mwebaze was killed and three other passengers reported missing. According to the Ugandan press, two further unidentified passengers were Congolese rebels. They also referred to two other businessmen who were identified by *Agence France Presse* as Arif Ulji, an Indian, and Zeev Shif, an Israeli working for "a company active in gold prospection". According to other sources in Kampala, the latter worked for Eforte, a company that is part of the Caleb International group and belongs to Museveni's half-brother, General Salim Saleh, officially a military adviser to the President. North-east Congo, the direction in which the plane was heading, is extremely rich in gold and there is an abundance of other resources (diamonds, wood, etc.).

3. SUDAN

Sudan has become an indirect participant in the war in Congo in two ways: firstly, by financing the three Ugandan anti-Museveni guerrilla movements and trying, during recent months, to bring them into a federation; secondly, by agreeing to support Kabila's government in his war against the Rwandan-Ugandan coalition.

The three guerrilla movements are the following:

Allied Democratic Forces (ADF)

The ADF is composed of members of a fundamentalist Islamic sect, Salaf Tabliq, and the residue of the Amon Bazira's National Army for the Liberation of Uganda (NALU). During the Rwandan-Ugandan offensive against Kivu in September-October 1996, when the two countries were allied with Laurent Kabila, it was pushed back to the Ruwenzori mountains. However, during the next two years it regained strength and has carried out several bloody attacks against Uganda in the Kasese region, from Congolese territory.

West Nile Bank Front

This movement is formed of those still faithful to Idi Amin Dada (overthrown by the Tanzanian army in 1979) and is active in North-west Uganda. It also has rear bases in Congo.

Lord's Resistance Army (LRA)

Successor to the "Holy Spirit Movement" founded by its spiritual leader, Alice Lakwena, the LRA is now led by Joseph Kony and its objective is to have the whole country ruled on the basis of the biblical ten commandments. The LRA is composed mainly of members of the Acholi ethnic group, frustrated by the loss of power after Museveni's victory in 1986. The LRA is principally known for its extreme cruelty and its preference for the forced recruitment of children who can be more easily terrified into fanaticism. It is mainly active in the north of the country (Gulu and Kithum) where its rule of terror prevents people from working in the fields and has considerably impoverished the region.

Sudan itself accuses Uganda of supporting the guerrilla movement in the south of the country, the Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA), composed of Christians and animists who reject the Islamic law imposed by Khartoum. The SPLA is ethnically close to the inhabitants of North Uganda and recruits from among the 350,000 refugees from South Sudan living in the north of Uganda.

In September 1998 President Museveni indicated that his troops were holding the main airports in the east of Congo in order to prevent the Sudanese from using them against Uganda. He added that he had information indicating the presence of Sudanese soldiers in Isiro (Orientale province, formerly Haut Zaire, bordering Sudan and Uganda). This has also been reported by a source among the humanitarian organisations working in the area.

On 1 September the Sudanese pro-government paper *Rai Al Aam* stated that President Kabila had secretly visited Khartoum on 28 August to look for aid. On 2 September a demonstration of some 300 "mujaheddin" claiming to be Congolese took place in Khartoum. They were demanding to be taken to Congo to fight at the side of President Kabila against the Ugandan enemy and presented the Congo Embassy in Khartoum with a note calling for the nomination of Muslims to government posts in Kinshasa.

The entry of Sudan into the war in Congo, if true, would obviously put another face on the conflict. Sudan is a sponsor of Islamic fundamentalism in Africa, which has made considerable progress in the past ten years, particularly in the south among countries such as Mozambique that are considered Christian. Sudanese charitable organisations of a fundamentalist nature – the spearhead of this Islamist conquest – have been present in Congo for several years and are easily able to recruit new "believers" in exchange for food aid to the most impoverished. Congo, devastated by the economic crisis, has for several years been experiencing a period of religious pietism and fanaticism. Dozens of evangelical sects, linked with or modelled on American sects, are openly recruiting among the population. Islam's success has been less spectacular than that of the evangelical and pentecostal sects, but is very evident in the large cities. Congolese Muslims claim to have eight million adherents out of a total population of some 45 million.

The USA regards Sudan as its principal enemy in Africa. Washington's policy in the region consists entirely of attempts to build alliances with Sudan's neighbours so as to isolate Khartoum politically and economically. If Sudan's presence in the Congolese conflict is confirmed, it is likely that Uganda and Rwanda will benefit from increased American support – which might fuel the war.

4. ZIMBABWE

Robert Mugabe's Zimbabwe was the first country to respond to Laurent Kabila's call for help at the end of August when the latter was experiencing defeat after defeat and the rebellion was making great strides forward. Mugabe was also involved in the first military investigation team sent to Congo by the Southern African Development Community (SADC). He also organised a summit meeting in Harare right at the start of the war in an attempt to initiate negotiations.

Zimbabwe has several objectives and interests to defend by intervening in Congo on the side of Kabila.

In the first place, SADC members are linked by a defence agreement in case of aggression. Officially, Zimbabwe, like Namibia and Angola, intervened at the request of a new member, the Democratic Republic of Congo, to protect it against external aggression. However, it should be noted that South Africa, Lesotho, Swaziland, Malawi, Botswana, Mozambique, Tanzania, Zambia, the Seychelles and Mauritius, also SADC members, have adopted a much more neutral stance towards Kinshasa than any of the three partners first mentioned here.

In the second place, Mugabe's interests are economic. A large number of sources in both Congo and Southern Africa have referred to lucrative joint enterprises undertaken by Mugabe and Kabila along with their sons, Leo Mugabe (really a nephew, but that counts as a "son" in African terms) and Joseph Kabila, but few details emerge. The two heads of state have signed a commercial contract worth more than 200 million dollars. This originally covered the supply of foodstuffs by Harare, but since 1998 it covers the supply of military uniforms to Congo.

Several sources also mention mining interests. An agreement on second-treatment copper refining in Zimbabwe has been reached between Zimbabwe Defence Industries and Gécamines, which allows Zimbabwe to take advantage of the under-used capacity in its factories. According to *La Lettre du Continent* of September 1998, the financial side of the mining contracts is being handled by the First Banking Corporation, which opened a branch in Kinshasa in February 1998 putting 64 million dollars at Kabila's disposal while financial arrangements were being worked out. There is also much talk of a cobalt deal involving the Mugabe clan.

In the third place, Zimbabwe has a vested interest in keeping open the main road to Congo and its commercial corridors if it is to have any claim to leadership in the region, or at least to contest that of South Africa and Uganda. Mugabe and

Kabila have links that date back to their Marxist past and Mugabe helped Kabila during the first war of liberation. In October 1998 the Kinshasa press reported that Harare wanted to increase and diversify its investments in Congo. According to the Zimbabwean ambassador, the two countries are "one single country, inhabited by one single people divided by colonialism."⁸

In addition, it seems that the war in Congo comes at an opportune time to create a diversion from the internal difficulties and challenges faced by President Mugabe, although it is difficult for him to justify, to an already discontented public, why he is sending Zimbabwean soldiers to Congo. In fact, Zimbabwe's entry into the war reduces its chances of receiving the financial assistance that it has requested from donors, including the European Union, to buy back land from white farmers in order to redistribute it to poor black Zimbabweans. According to some commentators, the operation would be welcomed by those in power in Harare who might see it as a way of "occupying" soldiers who were beginning to become agitated by the deteriorating economic situation. Unlike in Rwanda, Uganda and Angola, the costs of a war effort are something new to Zimbabwe and risk putting a further strain on the national budget. As long as Zimbabwe participates in the re-conquest of North-east Congo, fuel costs will increase. According to documents produced by the SADC, neither Zimbabwe, Namibia nor Angola possesses the budgetary resources that would allow them to support a prolonged war effort. In addition, Zimbabwe cannot afford to run up a foreign debt, unlike Angola, which has oil reserves.

Finally, there is a risk that the war will particularly tarnish Zimbabwe's image. The Secretary-General of Amnesty International has just denounced abuses committed in Congo by the Zimbabwean army, which, it should be remembered, already has a record in regard to ethnic cleansing (the 1985 war in Matabeleland).

5. NAMIBIA

Namibia is in a situation comparable to that of Zimbabwe. If Sam Nujoma and Kabila maintain good relations, Namibia has no national interests to defend in Congo. The first deaths of Namibian soldiers were particularly badly received by the population, who are also indignant that troops were sent without any discussion in parliament. According to the Namibian press, parliament recouped when, at the end of September, the opposition DTA questioned the government about the Congolese mining interests of Aron Mushimba, Sam Nujoma's brother-in-law. The DTA also questioned the interests in the Congolese war of Quando Holdings, a company linked to the party in power, SWAPO.

In addition, a part of public opinion fears the consequences of Namibia participation in the war. Thus, on 4 September "The Namibian" newspaper noted that troops of UNITA, the Angolan guerrilla movement, had amassed tanks and artillery on the Namibian border and were threatening to attack the area around Rundu if Namibian troops did not leave Congo. Questioned on this, the Namibian Minister of Defence indicated: "I am concerned with big, big problems. I am not

⁸ *Le Potentiel*, 2 October 1998.

concerned with UNITA. For me (this deployment) is not a problem. UNITA is dying and is not a threat to us." Nonetheless, UNITA is in the process of re-starting the war in Angola.

6. ANGOLA

The Angolan army entered the war on the side of Kabila without announcing it was doing so and while the rebels were relying, as the result of diplomatic contacts, on it doing nothing "for at least fifteen days". A part of the rebel troops that attacked in West Congo had been able to fly over Angolan territory without any problem only a little earlier. Angola made no sensational declarations of support for Kabila – contrary to those made by Mugabe and Nujoma. Indeed, Luanda is critical of the Kinshasa government for allowing the UNITA guerrilla movement to use Congolese territory as a transit for diamonds from the mines it controls, and which it uses to finance its activities. However, according to a police source, President Kabila has since dismissed a government agent, someone originally from Manowa like himself, because he had organised a deal with Jonas Savimbi, head of the Angolan guerrilla movement.

In 1996-97 Angola assisted the rebellion headed by Kabila and profited from the occasion to cut off President Mobutu's support for UNITA. In October 1996, Angola intervened militarily in Congo-Brazzaville to assist General Denis Sassou-Nguesso (a former Marxist like Angolan President Dos Santos) in his coup against Pascal Lissouba who allowed Savimbi to transit his diamond production through Congo-Brazzaville.

The Angolan military presence in Congo-Brazzaville should only have lasted a few weeks, but still continues two years later. As a result, questions are being raised about about Angola's intentions and it is known that Namibia, Botswana, Zambia and even South Africa are concerned that Angola may have entered a phase of expansionism. Zambia is even more fearful of Angola because Luanda played a role in the attempted coup against President Chiluba in 1997. This was intended to serve as a warning to the Zambian government because it (or officers corrupted by Jonas Savimbi) allowed UNITA to take delivery in Zambia of weapons sent from Togo.

In any case, Luanda now controls the Atlantic coasts of Angola, Congo-Brazzaville and the Democratic Republic of Congo where all three countries have oil installations, as well as rights to oil reserves. Luanda is therefore the *de facto* "sponsor" of the coastal regions raising the question as to whether the Angolan army would agree to withdraw from West Congo if requested to do so by Kinshasa.

With a force of 110,000 men, the Angolan army has been waging a civil war on its territory since 1975 and thus has a longer experience of combat than any of the other belligerent countries. It always employs the same tactics: an infantry advance under the protection of aerial bombardments. However, this did not prevent UNITA from gradually gaining an increasing amount of Angolan territory (up to 70%) during 20 years of war. Luanda ended the UNITA advances by bringing in mercenaries from the private South African firm, Executive Outcomes

(paid for out of the income from diamond mines). Their involvement produced significant successes against the guerrillas and UNITA was pushed into signing the Lusaka peace agreement in 1994. The breaking of this agreement by both parties is leading to a renewed outbreak of the war in Angola.

The aerial bombardments are proving very costly, but Angola can afford them by guaranteeing future oil earnings – which it is already doing. Nonetheless, Luanda registered losses to the value of 800 million dollars this year because of the fall in oil prices, a loss that cannot be compensated by the huge bonus from the discovery of important new oilfields.

Some Angolan and foreign analysts note that the return to peace would oblige Luanda's leaders to account for their management of the economy and provide information on oil revenues. These do not appear in the national budget and, despite repeated demands by the financial institutions set up under the Bretton Woods agreement, Angola refuses to give proof of transparency in this regard. It is known that the Angolan government and its clients divert much of the income from oil. As they were able to use the war to justify the lack of transparency, many powerful men in Luanda may find peace less convenient, especially if it obliged them to explain why, despite its oil wealth, Angola is among the last developed countries in the world.

7. SOUTH AFRICA

Also a SADC member, South Africa has refused to send troops to assist Laurent Kabila, insisting that a diplomatic solution should be found. In fact, Pretoria fears an open confrontation between two regional imperialists: the Rwandan-Ugandan coalition and Angola. Pretoria therefore played the "wise African" card that results from Nelson Mandela's reputation. He has carefully avoided responding to the outright provocations and *ad hominem* arguments of Robert Mugabe in order to avoid further deepening the divisions within the SADC in regard to support for the Congolese war. Although Nelson Mandela backed the Democratic Republic of Congo's entry into the SADC in 1997 because he hoped this would stabilise the country, the exact opposite has happened and the unity of the Southern African inter-state organisation has itself been thrown into question by the war in Congo.

In addition, Congo does not consider South Africa to be neutral in this situation as it has provided weapons to Rwanda and maintains good relations with President Museveni.

Finally, according to three specialised South African journalists⁹, several private South African mercenary firms (consortiums combining mercenary activities, arms sales, mines, transport, etc.) are also playing a role in the Congolese war. They say that Executive Outcomes, the best known among them and already working for the Angolan government, led the forces that took back the Inga dam from the rebels. Discussions are underway between this company and Kinshasa to provide air combat assistance and personal security for specific individuals. Another firm, not named by the journalists, sent around a hundred white

⁹ K. Pech, W. Boot and A. Eveleth in *Mail and Guardian*, 28 August 1998.

mercenaries to Katanga to defend strategic points. The Belgian newspaper *De Standaard* noted the presence of South African mercenaries from the firm "Security Lining" in Manono, Kabila's hometown in Katanga. According to the South African journalists, other South African mercenary firms are working for the other side. A Johannesburg firm, unnamed but run by former secret service officers, helped Uganda to acquire armoured troop carriers. One of the directors of this firm has sold weapons to the Mobutists.

The presence of South African mercenaries in the Congolese war theatre already appears to be a setback for the South African government, which had promised to limit the activities of these firms in foreign countries. Indeed South Africa's credibility is at stake given that some South African companies are working with both sides in the war at the same time as their government is calling for negotiations to end the fighting.

8. BURUNDI

The presence of Burundian troops in Congo has been reported on several occasions over the past few weeks, but to judge by the low level of attention paid to it by Kinshasa, it is of little importance. Up to then, paralysed by its various alliances, Burundi had hoped to remain neutral. On the one hand, Kabila has proved to be a reliable ally against the regional embargo and, on the other hand, the Burundian army regularly co-operates with the Rwandan army. If Burundian troops are present on the other side of the border, they have their own reasons for being there: to carry out policing operations in South Kivu, where there are groups of Burundian rebels, and to secure the border between Burundi and Congo, one of the main routes for bypassing the embargo.

9. CONGO-BRAZZAVILLE

Although it has retained a discreet distance up to now, Congo-Brazzaville could not avoid being drawn in if there is an eventual extension to the war being fought in its eastern neighbour.

In fact, both countries, together with Angola, which is openly involved in the conflict, have Bakongo populations that have been experiencing a renewed sense of identity over recent years. The Bakongo, who were organised in a powerful kingdom before colonisation, have had contact with Europeans since the 15th century and are increasingly resentful that nowhere do they have access to power. Bernard Kolelas (former mayor of Brazzaville), their leader in Congo-Brazzaville, was overthrown along with former President Lissouba by General Sassou Nguesso, with the aid of Angola. In Angola itself, the Bakongo were the victim of systematic massacres in Luanda in 1992.

The members of the Cabinda independence movement fighting against Luanda are also Bakongo. As for the Bakongo in the Democratic Republic of Congo, if not hostile to Kabila, they remain resolutely federalist although the Congolese President seeks a centralised government from Kinshasa. In addition, the Angolan counter-offensive against the rebels in Congo has resulted in many victims in Bas Congo province.

10. CHAD

During September, in his search for allies, President Kabila approached the countries of French-speaking Africa, which he had previously discounted. Under the watchful eye of France, which saw this as an occasion to set foot again in a region in which it has not been welcome since the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, a summit meeting in Libreville (Gabon) on 24 September supported Kinshasa. A few days later, as N'Djamena acknowledged at the beginning of October, Chad sent a thousand soldiers to Congo.

11. LIBYA

According to the Kinshasa press, Libya organised the transport of the Chad troops to Congo. The "Marxist/nationalist" solidarity that might exist between Khaddafi and Kabila is not enough to explain the sudden interest of the Libyan leader in Congo. It is more likely that he sees a chance to profit from the crisis and escape from the international isolation into which the United States has forced him. On 30 September, he even organised a mini summit meeting on the Congo situation.

This is also an attempt to reinforce the move initiated by the renewed refusal by the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) to respect the air embargo against Libya decreed by the United Nations following the Pan Am jet explosion over Lockerbie. In addition, his involvement in Congo could perhaps serve as a bargaining chip ("I will withdraw if ...") while Tripoli and Washington negotiate the normalisation of relations (delivery of the two terrorists accused in the Lockerbie disaster in exchange for an end to the embargo)?

Finally, it should not be forgotten that Colonel Khaddafi is an ally of Burundian Colonel Bagaza, former president of Burundi and the main political rival of Major Buyoya. This could be significant in the hypothetical case of Burundi entering the war.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

So far it seems difficult to determine the next evolution in the conflict with any certitude. However, we would prudently suggest four possible scenarios that might develop in the near future.

1. **KABILA'S ALLIES CARRY OFF A VICTORY AGAINST THE RWANDAN-UGANDAN COALITION AND THE REBEL MOVEMENT**

- A military victory reinforces President Kabila's ability to avoid sharing power and encourages him to become more authoritarian. The lack of any consensus remains a problem, along with the economic consequences: a lack of confidence on the part of both national and foreign investors; reduced tax revenues; increased difficulties for the government in regard to the payment of civil servants and the military; mutinies; a deepening of the economic crisis.
- The Kabila government's obligation to pay the allies (private and public) who came to their aid puts a further strain on the national budget.
- The Congolese army is still incapable of protecting the country's borders. There is a risk that Angola would take advantage of this to prolong its presence in the country, which might provoke a further rise in the level of xenophobia on the part of the Congolese population and bring about a new crisis.
- Uganda and Rwanda carry on a low-intensity war on the border causing further destruction and preventing peace in East Congo.
- There is a risk that the population will find a new scapegoat (the Katangans, those suspected of being former Mobutu supporters, people from Equator province, the people of Kasai).

Result: A growing instability that continues to threaten the region.

2. **A STATUS QUO BETWEEN KABILA'S ALLIES IN THE WEST AND CENTRE OF CONGO, AND THE RWANDAN-UGANDAN-REBEL COALITION DOMINATING IN THE EAST**

- This could happen following withdrawal by one of Kabila's allies as the result of internal pressure (public opinion, economic problems) or external pressure (diplomatic efforts).
- If the other African countries present in Congo were able to exploit the country's resources, they would become increasingly reluctant to leave the country. A new crisis of xenophobia among Congo's various populations is predictable, finding expression in systematic massacres of members of those groups ethnically close to the "invaders" or in alliance with them.

- Kabila and his people, Swahili-speakers from the east of Congo, would hold power in the west. However, they are practically strangers in this part of the country and there is very strong feeling against them because of a decision taken before the war that Swahili would be the only language on the country's new banknotes, although it is only one of four major national languages. The others, Lingala, Kikongo and Tschiluba, are the main languages used in the west and centre of Congo. The Rwandans and Ugandans would hold power in the east, the region in which they are most detested. Thus, in both parts of Congo there could be opposition, both latent and open, against the local government in power.

Result: Instability with an eventual risk of the break-up of Congo as we know it today and the definition of new borders.

3. STATUS QUO BETWEEN THE TWO OPPOSING CAMPS. AN AGREEMENT TO OPEN NEGOTIATIONS. THE FOREIGN FORCES PRESENT IN THE COUNTY TAKE ON A DIFFERENT ROLE, INTERPOSING TROOPS BETWEEN THE VARIOUS CONGOLESE FORCES

- Congolese sovereignty would appear to be further weakened.
- The risk remains that the country will fall apart.

Result: Short-term stability; medium- and long-term risk of instability.

4. STATUS QUO BETWEEN THE TWO CAMPS. AN AGREEMENT TO OPEN NEGOTIATIONS. ARRIVAL OF A PEACEKEEPING FORCE FROM A COUNTRY, OR COUNTRIES, NOT DIRECTLY INVOLVED IN THE CONFLICT

- The foreign troops already present would withdraw from Congolese territory and be replaced by troops acting under an international mandate.
- This mandated force could patrol the borders in Kivu and with Angola and cooperate with Kigali, Kampala and Luanda in order to meet their demands for security. They could also interpose between the different groups fighting in the interior of Congo.
- Negotiations would open on the internal problems in Kivu with the three neighbours affected by the guerrilla attacks.
- There would be negotiations over the issue of nationality for all Congolese.
- Negotiations would decide on a calendar for elections with reference to the National Sovereignty Conference (1991-92) and similar conferences on reconstruction organised by Kabila in 1997. It should be possible to reach a consensus on democratisation and federalism from the conclusions of these conferences.

Result: A possible peace with national agreement on a reasonable transition period before elections.

The final scenario is the one most to be desired: negotiations and a peacekeeping force. It would require the international community to act as guarantor, both politically and financially, of a negotiated settlement between the different parties involved in the war.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADFL:	Alliance des Forces Démocratiques pour la Libération du Congo-Zaire (Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire)
ADF:	Allied Democratic Forces
FAC:	Forces Armées Congolaises (Congolese Armed Forces)
FNLC:	Front National de Libération du Congo (National Front for the Liberation of Congo)
FONUS:	Forces Novatrices de l'Union Sacrée (New Forces of the Sacred Union)
Interahamwe:	Extremist Hutu militia groups
MPLA:	Mouvement Populaire de Libération de l'Angola (People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola)
NALU:	National Army for the Liberation of Uganda
PDSC:	Parti Démocrate-Social Chrétien (Christian Social-Democratic Party)
PRP:	Parti de la Révolution Populaire (People's Revolutionary Party)
RCD:	Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie (Congolese Assembly for Democracy)
SPLA:	Sudanese People's Liberation Army
UDI:	Union des démocrates indépendants (Union of Independent Democrats)
UDPS:	Union pour la Démocratie et le Progrès Social (Union for Democracy and Social Progress)
UNITA:	Union Nationale pour l'Indépendance Totale de l'Angola (National Union for Total Independence for Angola)