

## AFRICA RISK CONSULTING

### DRC Monthly Briefing May 2022

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#### DRC Summary 19 May 2022

*Dialogue between rebel groups and leaders of the East African Community (EAC) continues in Goma (North Kivu Province), Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), after Kenya's President Uhuru Kenyatta (2013-present) invited representatives of the rebel groups to Nairobi (Kenya) for a meeting with him and other government officials. A year from the implementation of the state of siege in Ituri and North Kivu Provinces, deadly attacks continue and are increasing in frequency. Candidates of President Félix Tshisekedi's (2019-present) Union Sacrée de la Nation (USN) political coalition win governorships in 13 of the 14 provinces holding elections for governors and vice governors. A new case of Ebola is confirmed in the city of Mbandaka (Équateur Province), marking the 14<sup>th</sup> Ebola outbreak in the DRC.*

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#### Rebel talks see some success after a rocky start...

Dialogue between rebel groups and leaders of the **East African Community (EAC)** continues to take place in **Goma (North Kivu Province)** following talks between rebel group representatives and **Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)** government officials in **Nairobi (Kenya)** in late April. The ongoing insecurity has left eastern DRC without significant investment in anything other than mining, which can only be successful through the employment of extensive private security. It has also impacted the DRC's ability to trade with neighbouring countries, leading to the EAC's prioritisation of addressing the insecurity and allowing the DRC to open borders and trade more efficiently. The DRC officially became a member of the EAC on April, although its admission was accepted in February (see *ARC Briefing DRC Feb 2022*).

Kenya's President **Uhuru Kenyatta** (2013-present) invited representatives of rebel groups active in DRC's north-eastern provinces of **Ituri**, North Kivu and **South Kivu** to Nairobi to meet with him and other government officials on 22 April.<sup>1</sup> However, rebel group representatives failed to arrive, citing logistical issues. DRC's President **Félix Tshisekedi** (2019-present) left Nairobi after the talks failed to materialise but appointed a delegation to remain in Nairobi, under the supervision of President Kenyatta, should any groups decide to come forward for talks.<sup>2</sup> By 27 April, representatives from 18-30 groups operational in Ituri, North and South Kivu took part in exchanges.<sup>3</sup> Armed groups listed their expectations while the DRC delegation encouraged the integration of the rebel groups into the DRC government's disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) programme.

Three representatives from the Nairobi consultations – Kenya's ambassador to the DRC, **Georges Masefu**; special envoy to the president of DRC **Serge Tshibangu**; and **Mission de l'Organisation des Nations Unies pour la stabilisation en République démocratique du Congo (MONUSCO)** official **Jabcon Mugeni** – arrived in Goma on 17 May to continue talks.<sup>4</sup> On 18 May, a coalition of eight **Mai-Mai** armed groups came forward to demand their participation in the dialogue.<sup>5</sup> Community leaders from eastern DRC have also submitted a memorandum to the three representatives in Goma, expressing their desire and commitment to take part in the talks.<sup>6</sup>

A visit by Tshisekedi to Nairobi for the **Heads of State Conclave** on the DRC prompted the decision to launch talks. Tshisekedi was joined by fellow EAC leaders Kenyatta, **Uganda's** President **Yoweri**

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<sup>1</sup> The East African, 23 Apr 2022

<sup>2</sup> The East African, 23 Apr 2022

<sup>3</sup> Actualite, 11 May 2022

<sup>4</sup> Radiokapi.net, 18 May 2022

<sup>5</sup> Actualite, 18 May 2022

<sup>6</sup> Radiokapi.net, 18 May 2022

**Museveni** (1986-present), **Burundi's** President **Evariste Ndayishimiye** (2020-present) and **Rwanda's** foreign affairs minister, **Vincent Biruta**, representing President **Paul Kagame** (2000-present).<sup>7</sup> The meeting, which began on 21 April, was the first joint effort by EAC leaders to address the ongoing violence in eastern DRC. The EAC leaders extended the invitation to rebel group leaders to begin dialogue and issued an official statement on failure to do so:

*"All armed groups in the DRC participate unconditionally in the political process to resolve their grievances. Failure to do so, All Congolese Armed groups would be considered as negative forces and handled militarily by the region."*<sup>8</sup>

Despite the participation of some rebel groups in dialogue, the seven EAC members have agreed to establish and deploy a regional military force in eastern DRC. The regional force will counter rebel groups that continue to refuse to attend talks.<sup>9</sup>

The decision to begin talks has met with support from several diplomats including representatives from the **European Union (EU)**, **China**, the **United States (US)** and **France**.<sup>10</sup> Diplomats were briefed on the ongoing talks during a meeting held at MONUSCO headquarters in Kinshasa. **African Union (AU)** chair **Moussa Faki Mahamat** has also commended the decision by the regional bloc and *"their common efforts in finding a sustainable solution to the situation in eastern DRC and the **Great Lakes** region as a whole"*.<sup>11</sup>

### ... as deadly attacks continue

A year from the 1 May 2021 implementation of the state of siege in the provinces of Ituri and North Kivu, deadly attacks continue amid increasing frequency. On 8 May, the rebel **Cooperative for the Development of Congo (Codeco)** group, a loose association of various **Lendu** militia groups, targeted an artisanal gold mine in Ituri province, killing approximately 40 miners.<sup>12</sup> The gold mine, known as **Camp Blanquete**, is currently the source of hostilities between Codeco and another rebel group, **Zaire**. The two groups are fighting for control of the mine, a lucrative way to fund their activities. **Forces armées de la république démocratique du Congo (FARDC)** (Congolese army) spokesperson Lieutenant **Jules Ngongo** said in a statement that the miners killed in the attack were caught in the crossfire between two groups. Over 100 miners are missing, believed to be dead. The group reportedly took advantage of decreased military presence at the time of the attack.

Codeco struck again on 9 May, killing 14 civilians and one soldier at the **Loda** camp for internally displaced persons in Ituri.<sup>13</sup> DRC-based NGO **Convention pour le respect des droits humains (CRDH)** also announced on 15 May that the **Allied Democratic Forces (ADF)** rebel group had killed 20 people in the week of 8-15 May in **Djugu**, a district of Ituri.<sup>14</sup>

Ituri military governor lieutenant-general **Johnny Luboya Nkashama** hosted a press briefing on 17 May reassuring civilians that the state of siege in the province has not been a failure. Nkashama said two of the goals of the three-phase mission had been achieved, namely the securing of **Bunia** town and the reopening of the main roads in the province.<sup>15</sup> The final goal, recovering areas occupied by armed groups, is said to be underway.

However, the data does not support Nkashama's claims. Violent attacks in Ituri and North Kivu have increased and the number of deaths nearly doubled since the implementation of the state of siege.

<sup>7</sup> The East African, 23 Apr 2022

<sup>8</sup> The East African, 22 Apr 2022

<sup>9</sup> The East African, 26 Apr 2022

<sup>10</sup> Radiokapi.net, 18 May 2022

<sup>11</sup> The East African, 26 Apr 2022

<sup>12</sup> The East African, 9 May 2022

<sup>13</sup> Reuters, 10 May 2022

<sup>14</sup> Radiokapi.net, 15 May 2022

<sup>15</sup> Politico.cd, 18 May 2022

**Kivu Security Tracker** for the period May 2020 – May 2021 registered 1,350 deaths and 1,315 incidents. For the period May 2021 – May 2022, it registered 2,563 deaths and 1,979 incidents.<sup>16</sup>

### ... as elections for 14 provincial governors go ahead

The election of governors and vice governors for 14 of DRC's 26 provinces was successfully held on 6 May after a postponement from 6 April (see *ARC Briefing DRC Mar 2022*). Although the last full round of provincial elections took place in April 2019, President Tshisekedi dismissed the governors of the 14 provinces in December 2020, accusing them of various crimes or misdemeanours. However, their loyalty to the party of former president **Joseph Kabila's** (2001-2019) **Front Commun pour le Congo (FCC)**, also counted against them.<sup>17</sup> The FCC won only one governorship, in **Maniema**, while candidates from President Tshisekedi's ruling coalition, the **Union Sacrée de la Nation (USN)**, won governorships in 13 of the 14 provinces.<sup>18</sup>

Prime minister **Jean-Michel Sama Lukonde** expressed his satisfaction with the elections and his hope that the elections and newly elected governors would bring stability and development.<sup>19</sup> **Synergie des missions d'observation citoyenne des élections (SYMOCCEL)** (synergy of citizen election observation missions) also released a report on the elections, stating that the ballot took place in a peaceful environment and that there were no issues with the voting machines.<sup>20</sup>

The outcome has consolidated the ruling coalition's power in the provinces and their departments, an outcome that Tshisekedi will welcome ahead of the presidential elections scheduled for 2023.<sup>21</sup>

### New Ebola outbreak declared

A new case of **Ebola** was confirmed in the city of **Mbandaka (Équateur Province)** on 23 April, just four months after a previous outbreak ended.<sup>22</sup> The latest case marks the 14<sup>th</sup> Ebola outbreak in DRC and has prompted the **World Health Organization (WHO)** to begin containment procedures, including a vaccination campaign on 27 April. At least 200 doses of **United States**-headquartered pharmaceutical company **Merck's ERVEBO** vaccine were shipped from Goma to begin vaccinating close contacts of those infected.<sup>23</sup> The vaccines are kept in a WHO facility in Goma, the capital of North Kivu. This presents challenges as the province often experiences rebel attacks and there is heightened insecurity (see above). The vaccines are also shipped to other remote areas where there is little road infrastructure. The WHO has previously reported that it requires more than 800 vehicles, at least one airplane, two helicopters, several trucks and 410 motorcycles and 37 ambulances to move both supplies and team members between areas where outbreaks have occurred.<sup>24</sup>

During the previous outbreak, declared over in January, the WHO vaccinated approximately 1,800 people with the ERVEBO vaccine.<sup>25</sup> The WHO declared the campaign a success, announcing on 12 May that no new cases had been identified for seven days, although health authorities are still monitoring 400 close contacts for symptoms.<sup>26</sup>

The WHO has commended the DRC on the progress it has made in understanding Ebola and its ability to stem outbreaks.<sup>27</sup> However, until the government improves the living conditions that currently

<sup>16</sup> Kivu Security Tracker, last updated 5 May 2022

<sup>17</sup> Actualite, 7 May 2022

<sup>18</sup> Actualite, 15 May 2022

<sup>19</sup> Actualite, 8 May 2022

<sup>20</sup> Actualite, 6 May 2022

<sup>21</sup> ARC DRC Analyst

<sup>22</sup> Reuters, 23 Apr 2022

<sup>23</sup> Reuters, 27 Apr 2022

<sup>24</sup> Reliefweb, accessed 19 May 2022

<sup>25</sup> Reuters, 23 Apr 2022

<sup>26</sup> Reuters, 12 May 2022

<sup>27</sup> ACP Congo, 4 May 2022

allow Ebola to spread and thrive, the DRC will continue to spend significant resources controlling outbreaks and importing vaccines.<sup>28</sup>

## Planner

20 Dec 2022 **Kinshasa (DRC)** End date of peacekeeping mission **Mission de l'Organisation des Nations Unies pour la stabilisation en République démocratique du Congo (MONUSCO)**;  
2023 **(DRC)** Scheduled presidential and parliamentary elections

## Chronology

18 May 2022 **Kampala (Uganda)** *Actualité*. **Ugandan** military officials announce they will withdraw troops present in the **Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)** as part of a joint operation by 31 May, unless a new agreement is signed;

17 May 2022 **Kinshasa (DRC)** *ACP Congo*. President **Félix Tshisekedi** has appointed new ambassadors to the **Holy See, Turkey, Luxembourg** and the **United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization**;

16 May 2022 **Kinshasa (DRC)** *Congo Independent*. **Independent National Electoral Commission** president **Denis Kadima Kazadi** reaffirms that elections will go ahead in 2023;

16 May 2022 **New Delhi (India)** *Actualité*. A high-level mission has been announced to travel to **New Delhi** to continue discussions with the **Indian** government on the terms of the resumption of construction work on the **Katende dam** in **Kasaï Central**, which has been suspended for seven years;

15 May 2022 **Kinshasa (DRC)** *Actualité*. Government adopts a draft law authorising the ratification of the **Treaty of Accession** to the **East African Community**;

15 May 2022 **Kinshasa (DRC)** *Actualité*. Former president **Joseph Kabila** chairs a meeting of his political party **Parti du peuple pour la reconstruction et la démocratie (PPRD)**, organising a congress for June 2023 to elect its new leaders;

14 May 2022 **Istanbul (Turkey)** *ACP Congo*. **Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)** foreign affairs minister **Christophe Lutundula** and his **Turkish** counterpart, **Mevlut Cavusoglu**, sign a headquarters agreement to further strengthen ties between the DRC and Turkey;

13 May 2022 **South Kivu (DRC)** *Actualité*. **South Kivu** governor **Théo Ngwabidje Kasi** appoints **Koko Cirimwami Akeem** as provincial minister of mines and hydrocarbons to replace **Apollinaire Bulindi**, dismissed for derogatory and insulting remarks towards the provincial governor;

12 May 2022 **Goma (DRC)** *The East African*. **United States** government warns of a possible terrorist attack in **Goma**, eastern **DRC**, where armed conflict has been raging for months;

12 May 2022 **Goma (DRC)** *eNCA*. Military court acquits rapper **Nzanzu Muyisa Makasi** who was sentenced to two years in prison for criticising the president;

11 May 2022 **Kinshasa (DRC)** *Reuters*. Mines minister **Antoinette N'Samba Kalambayi** is seeking to cancel a decree granting **Entreprise Générale du Cobalt (EGC)** a monopoly over artisanal cobalt produced in the country;

10 May 2022 **Kinshasa (DRC)** *ACP Congo*. **Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)** defence minister **Gilbert Kabanda Kurhenga** and **Italy's** ambassador to the DRC, **Alberto Petrangeli**, meet to discuss the relaunch of the bilateral cooperation in the defence and security sectors;

9 May 2022 **Kinshasa (DRC)** *Actualité*. Government clears 50% of the arrears of the provincial deputies, unpaid for more than 10 months;

<sup>28</sup> ARC DRC analyst

8 May 2022 **Kinshasa (DRC)** *Actualité*. Government adopts a bill authorising the ratification of the treaty on the prohibition of nuclear weapons;

6 May 2022 **Kinshasa (DRC)** *Congo Independent*. Political and social forces arrange a sit-in at the **People's Palace** – the seat of the **National Assembly** and **Senate** in Kinshasa – to demand, among other things, a broad consensus around electoral reforms;

5 May 2022 **Kinshasa (DRC)** *Mining Technology*. **DRC** mines ministry signs ministerial decree to award the mining licence for the **Australia**-based **AVZ Minerals' Manono** lithium and tin project owned;

4 May 2022 **Kinshasa (DRC)** *ACP Congo*. A delegation from **Ethiopian Airlines** meets prime minister **Jean-Michel Sama Lukonde** to discuss the creation of the **Air Congo Company**;

3 May 2022 **Kinshasa (DRC)** *Actualite*. **Assemblée Nationale** (national assembly) adopts the bill extending the state of siege in **Ituri** and **North Kivu**;

30 Apr 2022 **Lusaka (Zambia)** *The East African*. President **Felix Tshisekedi** arrives in **Lusaka** for an official state visit aiming to strengthen bilateral cooperation between the two countries;

27 Apr 2022 **Kinshasa (DRC)** *ACP Congo*. The defence ministry announces the relaunch of military cooperation and training between **Belgium** and **DRC**;

27 Apr 2022 **Kinshasa (DRC)** *Actualite*. **André Mbata** is elected vice-president of the **Assemblée Nationale** (national assembly), replacing **Jean-Marc Kabund** who resigned on 31 March;

26 Apr 2022 **Matadi (DRC)** *ACP Congo*. Fisheries minister **Adrien Bokele Djema** is working to acquire fishing boats to revive the fishing sector;

23 Apr 2022 **Mbandaka (DRC)** *UN News*. **DRC** health authorities declare a new outbreak of **Ebola** after a case was confirmed in **Mbandaka**, a city in the north-western **Equateur Province**;

21 Apr 2022 **Kinshasa (DRC)** *Africanews*. **Kenyan** government announces that it will host a meeting between rebels in the eastern **Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)**, the **DRC** government, **Uganda**, **Burundi** and **Rwanda** in **Kinshasa**;

20 Apr 2022 **North Kivu (DRC)** *The East African*. **Kenya Defence Forces** elite soldiers kill five militants belonging to the **Isis Central African Republic (IS-CAP)** terror group in the eastern **DRC**;

20 Apr 2022 **Kinshasa (DRC)** *ACP Congo*. Government announces a 30% salary increase for civil servants and public agents;

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