

AFRICA RISK CONSULTING

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DRC Summary 21 February 2022

Agence Nationale de Renseignements (ANR) (national intelligence agency) officials arrest President Felix Tshisekedi's (2019-present) special security advisor, François Beya, for allegedly planning a coup d'état, while Tshisekedi is attending the General Assembly of the African Union of Heads of State and Government in Ethiopia. DRC's bid to join the East African Community (EAC) has been successful, a positive development for President Tshisekedi who began the admission process in June 2019. The International Court of Justice (ICJ), the United Nations' (UN) top court, has ordered Uganda to pay \$325m in reparations to DRC for crimes committed during the Second Congo War (1998-2003). The DRC government spokesman announces changes to the Covid-19 restrictions put in place to curb the spread of the virus.

Tshisekedi's security advisor arrested for alleged coup d'état plot

The **Agence Nationale de Renseignements (ANR)** (national intelligence agency) arrested President **Felix Tshisekedi's** (2019-present) special security advisor, **François Beya**, on 5 February on charges of planning a coup d'état.¹ Beya's arrest came while Tshisekedi was attending the **General Assembly of the African Union of Heads of State and Government in Addis Ababa (Ethiopia)**. There is little evidence to suggest that the military was involved in the alleged coup plot, and it is unlikely that the armed forces, assessed to be loyal to Tshisekedi, would throw their weight behind such a plot.²

Beya has a long history of involvement in DRC's security sector. He served as a security advisor to former president **Mobutu Sese Seko** (1965-1997), chief of staff within the ANR under former president **Laurent-Désiré Kabila** (1997-2001), and deputy director-general of the **Directorate General of Migration** under former president **Joseph Kabila** (2001-2019).³ He was appointed to his role of special security advisor as part of the deal between President Tshisekedi and his predecessor, Joseph Kabila, during the transfer of power in 2019.⁴ Beya is seen as an influential member of the government, despite not being a politician, and was an important link to the former regime during the transfer of power, allowing for stability.⁵ However, Beya is still loyal to Kabila.⁶

The government or presidency has not officially confirmed any speculation or rumours surrounding his arrest. However, presidency spokesperson **Tharcisse Kasongo Mwema** stated on 8 February that "*no attempt to destabilise our democratic institutions will be tolerated*".⁷ This came after Mwema's comment that serious evidence of a national security threat was found.

Senators of the ruling **Union Sacrée de la Nation (USN)** met on 9 February to reaffirm their support for Tshisekedi. On 13 February, 5,000 members of **Forces armées de la république démocratique du Congo (FARDC)** (DRC armed forces), the elite unit responsible for Tshisekedi's safety, marched through **Kinshasa**,^{8 9} in what could analysts say could be a show of force on the part of the government.

¹ Taarifa, 6 Feb 2022

² Source, ARC DRC analyst

³ The East African, 9 Feb 2022

⁴ Le Journal de la Afrique, 9 Feb 2022

⁵ Barron's, 9 Feb 2022

⁶ Source, ARC DRC analyst

⁷ Actualite, 8 Feb 2022

⁸ Voice of Congo, 10 Feb 2022

⁹ Africanews, 13 Feb 2022

The alleged coup plot comes as Tshisekedi is continuing to dismantle the patronage system built by his predecessor, and may be viewed as an attempt by Kabila loyalists to undermine Tshisekedi's plans. The alleged plot is likely to spur Tshisekedi to further consolidate power, a move that can only improve political stability in DRC. The armed forces are loyal to Tshisekedi, which contributes to DRC's overall coup risk remaining low.

DRC successfully admitted to the EAC

DRC's bid to join the **East African Community (EAC)** has been successful, a positive development for President Tshisekedi who began the admission process in June 2019. The final EAC negotiations took place between the EAC and DRC from 15-24 January, concluding with a recommendation to the supreme organ of the EAC, the **EAC Summit of Heads of State** (the **Summit**), to consider admitting DRC to the EAC.¹⁰ The EAC **Council of Ministers** has directed the EAC **Secretariat** to develop a draft plan for the integration of DRC into the EAC. The Summit holds the ultimate power to admit DRC and is expected to meet at the end of February for this purpose.¹¹

EAC principal secretary **Kevit Desai** has stated that DRC's submission to the community will play an important role in linking the region through port usage through the **Indian Ocean** and the **Atlantic Ocean**, ultimately boosting regional trade.¹² It is estimated that regional GDP could increase by \$50 billion with the addition of DRC to the bloc. **Uganda's** President **Yoweri Museveni** (1986-present) also claims that DRC's admission will bolster security in the **Great Lakes Region**.¹³

Tshisekedi has faced several internal challenges since assuming the presidency; however, admission to the EAC can create several opportunities for him to tackle these through boosting regional trade, intelligence sharing and information sharing on key areas such as terrorism.

Uganda ordered to pay war reparations to DRC

The **International Court of Justice (ICJ)**, the **United Nations' (UN)** top court, has ordered Uganda to pay \$325m in reparations to DRC for crimes committed during the **Second Congo War** (1998-2003).¹⁴ The ICJ has ordered the payments to start in September 2022, with Uganda paying \$65m each year until the debt is paid off.¹⁵ DRC claims 180,000 civilians died during the war, leading the country to initially request a sum of \$11 billion for damages and loss of life; however, the court denied this amount and allocated \$225m for loss of life and \$60m for damage to natural resources.¹⁶ DRC has not announced how the reparations will be distributed or used.

The case began in 2005 when the ICJ ruled that Uganda had violated international law by occupying parts of **Ituri** province with troops and supported armed groups.¹⁷ At the height of the war, Uganda and **Rwanda** backed rebel forces against DRC, fighting for control of **Ituri** province, known for its mineral riches.

Uganda maintains that the 2005 ruling was incorrect and therefore that the repatriations order is also *"unfair and wrong"*.¹⁸ The ICJ's latest ruling comes at a time when Uganda and DRC are working to improve relations, most prominently through the joint military operation between the **Uganda People's Defence Force** and the FARDC. The two neighbours are also in the process of working on a 223-km joint road project, aimed at improving trade between the two countries.¹⁹

¹⁰ The Citizen, 10 Feb 2022

¹¹ The Citizen, 14 Feb 2022

¹² The Standard, 14 Feb 2022

¹³ The Citizen, 14 Feb 2022

¹⁴ Al Jazeera, 9 Feb 2022

¹⁵ The East African, 15 Feb 2022

¹⁶ The Organization for World Peace, 16 Feb 2022

¹⁷ Reuters, 10 Feb 2022

¹⁸ Reuters, 10 Feb 2022

¹⁹ Independent, 14 Feb 2022

Museveni and Tshisekedi were also present at the recent mini summit on regional peace and security held in the **Republic of Congo (ROC)**.²⁰ During the summit, the success of the joint military operation is said to have been discussed at great length, with **Togo** and ROC reiterating their support for the operation. The increased focus on the relations between DRC and Uganda increases pressure for the countries to maintain the thawing of relations between the two countries, despite the ruling by the ICJ.

Uganda's **Ministry of Foreign Affairs** has stated that the country is still in talks with DRC on the reparations as they seek a mutual solution.

Covid-19 restrictions easing

The **Ministère de la Communication et médias et Porte-parole du gouvernement** (communications and media ministry and government spokesman) has announced changes to the **Covid-19** restrictions put in place to curb the spread of the virus. The curfew between 10pm and 5am across all provinces except those under the state of siege, namely Ituri and **North Kivu**, has been lifted.²¹ Travellers entering DRC will no longer be required to take an additional Covid-19 test upon arrival if fully vaccinated against Covid-19. This will also apply to individuals who are travelling internally.²²

DRC continues to have one of the lowest vaccination rates against Covid-19, with only 528,485 vaccine doses administered to date. Vaccine hesitancy is an issue, in addition to distribution chains facing transport and logistical challenges. DRC has scored a low 2.43 out of 5 on the **Logistics Performance Index**, an indication of these challenges and the effects they have including DRC's inability to administer vaccines on short notice or make vaccines available in remote areas.²³

As of 21 February, the DRC had recorded 85,876 cases of Covid-19 in its population of 90 million, with 1,335 deaths attributed to Covid-19.²⁴

Restrictions to curb the spread of Covid-19 include the following measures:

- All travellers entering DRC are subject to screening, including temperature checks;
- Meetings, celebrations and weddings must not exceed 50% of the venue capacity;
- Restrictions regarding the number of people per vehicle for public transport are in place.
- Wearing of facemasks is mandatory in public and private transport as well as in public places;
- Travellers are advised to monitor local media for the latest developments in local Covid-19 measures, which can change at little notice;
- Public places (banks, restaurants, and shops) are open with social distancing measures in place and screening measures.

²⁰ Voice of Congo, 13 Feb 2022

²¹ Agence Congolaise de Presse, 14 Feb 2022

²² Actualite, 14 Feb 2022

²³ Down to Earth, 9 Feb 2022

²⁴ Reuters Covid-19 Tracker, 21 Feb 2022

Planner

24 Feb 2022 **Kinshasa (DRC)** 10th Summit of **Heads of State and Government of the signatory countries of the Framework Agreement for Peace, Security and Cooperation for DRC** and the Region.

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

21 Feb 2022 **Kinshasa (DRC)** *ACP Congo*. **DRC** and **Turkey** have signed four cooperation agreements in the fields of defence, transport, infrastructure, and the economy during a visit by Turkey's President **Recep Tayyip Erdogan** to DRC;

20 Feb 2022 **Kinshasa (DRC)** *Actualite*. President **Felix Tshisekedi** stresses during the 41st meeting of the **Council of Ministers** the importance of creating a Digital Code to prevent cybercrime;

20 Feb 2022 **Ituri & North Kivu (DRC)** *Voice of Congo*. A second parliamentary assessment of the state of siege has been scheduled for 15 March.

19 Feb 2022 **Kinshasa (DRC)** *Actualite*. A **Congolese** commission has started negotiations with **Israeli** national, **Dan Gertler**, aimed at the recovery of mining and oil assets worth approximately \$2 billion;

16 Feb 2022 **Kindu (DRC)** *Congo Independent*. A **Belgian** military detachment is expected to arrive in **Kindu** this year after approval by the Kingdom of Belgium;

15 Feb 2022 **Kinshasa (DRC)** *Actualite*. President **Felix Tshisekedi** has appointed three new ambassadors to **Kenya**, **South Africa** and **Russia**, and has appointed **Jean-Jacques Luboya Tshishima** as secretary-general to the presidency;

12 Feb 2022 **Kinshasa (DRC)** *Voice of Congo*. The health ministry announces possible embezzlement of at least \$300m;

12 Feb 2022 **Oyo (Republic of Congo)** *Actualite*. President **Felix Tshisekedi** arrives in **Oyo (Republic of Congo)** for a quadripartite summit alongside presidents **Yoweri Museveni (Uganda)**, **Faure Gnassingbé Eyadema (Togo)** and **Dennis Sassou Nguesso (Republic of Congo)**;

12 Feb 2022 **Kinshasa (DRC)** *The Citizen*. Former president **Joseph Kabila's** brother has been barred from leaving **DRC** on a flight destined for **South Africa**;

7 Feb 2022 **South Kivu (DRC)** *The Defence Post*. The Congolese army announces it has killed 33 armed men during fighting against local militia allied to **Burundian** rebels in **South Kivu**;

5 Feb 2022 **Beni (DRC)** *Al Jazeera*. A bomb injures at least four people at a crowded market in **Beni**, eastern **DRC**;

2 Feb 2022 **Ituri (DRC)** *The East African*. Militia fighters have massacred at least 60 people, mostly internally displaced persons, in **Savo Camp** in **Ituri province**;

2 Feb 2022 **Kinshasa (DRC)** *Actualite*. At least 25 people have died of electrocution after a high-voltage electric cable was cut in a local market;

1 Feb 2022 **Kinshasa (DRC)** *AL-Monitor*. **Dubai-based DP World** has started construction on the **Banana** port in **DRC**, the country's first deep seaport;

31 Jan 2022 **Katanga (DRC)** *RFI*. **Katanga Military Court** has sentenced 51 people to death over the murders of two **United Nations** researchers in 2017;

29 Jan 2022 **North Kivu (DRC)** *Africanews*. At least 2,000 people from six villages in eastern **DRC** flee new clashes between the Congolese army and **March 23 Movement (M23)**;

24 Jan 2022 **Tanganyika (DRC)** *Reuters*. **China's Zijin Mining Group Co. Ltd** officially launches its first lithium exploration project through a joint venture with state-owned mining firm **Cominière**;

20 Jan 2022 **Kinshasa (DRC)** *Mining Weekly*. **Fitch Solutions** states that the increased risk of instability between the **DRC's** cabinet and parliament could add pressure to the global battery supply chain over the next few quarters;

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