

## AFRICA RISK CONSULTING

### DRC Monthly Briefing June 2025

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#### DRC Summary 23 June 2025

*The United States (US) state department announces on 18 June that the foreign ministers of the DRC and Rwanda will sign a peace agreement on 27 June in a bid to end the conflict between the two countries. The World Bank on 3 June pledges \$1 billion to support the DRC as it prepares for the next phase of the massive Inga III hydropower project, which could potentially be the world's largest. United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) votes to elect DRC to join the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) as a non-permanent member for two years starting 1 January 2026.*

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#### US says Rwanda and DRC to sign peace agreement on 27 June...

The **United States (US)** state department announced on 18 June that the foreign ministers of the DRC and **Rwanda** will sign a peace agreement on 27 June in a bid to end the conflict between the two countries that has persisted for decades.<sup>1</sup> The announcement came after three days of talks in **Washington (US)** with technical teams from both countries mediated by US and observed by officials from **Qatar**. President **Felix Tshisekedi's** (2019-present) spokesperson, **Tina Salama**, confirmed the announcement in a post on **X** (previously **Twitter**), as did Rwanda's foreign minister, **Olivier Nduhungirehe**.<sup>2</sup> US secretary of state, **Marco Rubio**, is expected to witness the signing of the peace accord, which will be followed by a summit which Tshisekedi and Rwanda's President **Paul Kagame** (2000-present) will attend. The state department did not disclose when the presidential meeting will take place.

The state department noted that the DRC-Rwanda agreement includes provisions on respect for territorial integrity and a prohibition of hostilities as well as disengagement, disarmament, and conditional integration of non-state armed groups.<sup>3</sup> The agreement also includes plans for the return of refugees and displaced people and regional economic integration.<sup>4</sup>

The DRC, the US, **United Nations (UN)** and **European Union (EU)** have accused Rwanda of backing the **M23** rebel group, which relaunched a rebellion in eastern DRC in 2021. The M23's rapid advance this year has left more than 7,000 people dead, displaced thousands more and given the rebels control of vast mineral-rich hubs of **Goma (North Kivu Province)** and **Bukavu (South Kivu Province)**.<sup>5</sup> The M23's capture of these key cities deepened instability in an already unstable region and caused widespread international condemnation of the group and Rwanda, which continues to deny supporting the rebels. The rebels say they're protecting the rights of ethnic **Tutsis** in the DRC and have threatened to overthrow Tshisekedi's government.

A final peace deal would be a major step in the right direction and US involvement and its threat of further sanctions against Rwanda could lead to further progress. With fighting still ongoing, signing a final peace agreement could prevent further deaths and displacement, and ease instability in the region. Should this agreement yield tangible results, these negotiations would be viewed as an important milestone in ending the conflict.

Discussions are also ongoing for potential US investment and security assistance in the DRC's fight against M23 (see *ARC Briefing DRC Apr 2025*). Tshisekedi requested an urgent meeting with US

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<sup>1</sup> US State department, 18 Jun 2025

<sup>2</sup> Bloomberg, 18 Jun 2025

<sup>3</sup> US State department, 18 Jun 2025

<sup>4</sup> Bloomberg, 18 Jun 2025

<sup>5</sup> DRC, Rwanda and Qatar joint statement, 18 Mar 2025

President **Donald Trump** (2025-present) to offer the US exclusive access to critical mineral and infrastructure projects in exchange for security assistance (*see ARC Briefing DRC Mar 2025*). While talks between the two countries are ongoing, senior adviser for Africa at the US state department, **Massad Boulos**, said on 17 April that he and Tshisekedi had “*chartered a path forward*” for a minerals pact.<sup>6</sup> Boulos also said that the US intends to support the DRC by encouraging private-sector investment by using government agencies, including the **US International Development Finance Corporation (DFC)** and **US Export-Import (EXIM) Bank**.

Despite this, major doubts remain about whether a minerals deal with the US and greater US involvement in the DRC will easily resolve hostilities in country. Lasting peace in the region will require a comprehensive approach that addresses the root causes of conflict, including political, economic, and ethnic tensions, as well as improved governance and security. Without such systemic changes, the cycle of violence and unrest may continue despite the peace agreement and potential minerals deal.

### World Bank commits \$1 billion to revive key DRC hydro project...

The **World Bank** on 3 June pledged \$1 billion to support the next phase of the massive **Inga III** hydropower project in DRC as part of its broader **Mission 300** programme, which seeks to bring electricity to 300 million Africans by 2030 and could mobilise up to \$85 billion in private investment. Inga III is part of the **Grand Inga** complex on the **Congo River**, which has the capacity to eventually generate 40,000MW, which would make it the largest hydropower project in the world.<sup>7</sup>

Only three phases have been developed or are in development but it is expected to grow to between six and seven phases. The Inga III phase could deliver 11,000 MW, more than triple the DRC’s current power capacity, at an estimated cost of \$10 billion. It could power cities like **Kinshasa**, process minerals, support the critical **Lobito Corridor** trade route, and supply energy across multiple African power pools. Of the \$1 billion, \$250m will go toward initial steps such as like technical studies, economic development, utility reform, and attracting private developers.<sup>8</sup>

However, the project has had a troubled history, as earlier attempts involving companies from China, **Spain**, **Australia** and **Nigeria** all collapsed.<sup>9</sup> The World Bank itself pulled out of a previous assistance effort in 2016, citing governance issues. This time, the bank appears to be taking a cautious, phased approach, emphasising credibility, transparency and reform, especially as the struggling state-owned utility **Société Nationale d’Électricité (SNEL)** must become financially viable to support such a vast public-private undertaking.

Despite its potential, Inga III is facing significant pushback. Critics, including US-based nonprofit, **International Rivers**, warn it could displace over 30,000 people and worsen the DRC’s debt.<sup>10</sup> Despite these concerns, the government presented its plans at international energy events, including the **Mission 300 Private Sector Consultation** in the UK on 4 June, in a bid to attract private **European** investors. Other African countries, including **Zimbabwe**, **Ghana** and **Mozambique**, are also presenting their energy plans under the Mission 300 umbrella.

The Inga III project is a very ambitious project and the stakes are high - if successful, it could transform not only DRC’s energy landscape but also the broader region’s economic future. But given the project’s difficult past, its success will hinge on strong governance, meaningful reform, and buy-in from both investors and communities.

### DRC elected to UN Security Council

On 3 June, the **United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)** voted to elect DRC and **Liberia** to join the **United Nations Security Council (UNSC)** organ as a non-permanent member for two years starting

<sup>6</sup> Financial Times, 27 Apr 2025

<sup>7</sup> Moneyweb, 4 Jun 2025

<sup>8</sup> Bloomberg, 3 Jun 2025

<sup>9</sup> Bloomberg, 3 Jun 2025

<sup>10</sup> Moneyweb, 4 Jun 2025

on 1 January 2026.<sup>11</sup> The UNSC is the only UN body that can make legally binding decisions such as imposing sanctions and authorising the use of force. The UNSC has five permanent veto-wielding members - the **United Kingdom (UK)**, China, **France**, **Russia** and US. The remaining ten non-permanent members are elected, with five new members joining every year.

The election is conducted through a secret ballot and a country must obtain at least two-thirds of the votes of member states present at the UNGA electoral session to obtain a seat on the UNSC.<sup>12</sup> To ensure geographical representation, seats are allocated to regional groups. The DRC and Liberia were the **African Union's (AU)** choice, and join **Bahrain**, **Colombia** and **Latvia** as fellow non-permanent members.<sup>13</sup> The two African countries will replace the continent's current representatives, **Algeria** and **Sierra Leone**. This is the third time that the DRC has been elected to the 15-member UNSC, serving its last term in 1990/1991.<sup>14</sup> The other three newly elected non-permanent members will replace **South Korea**, **Guyana** and **Slovenia**.<sup>15</sup> In terms of voting, Bahrain received 186 votes, DRC 183, Liberia 181, Colombia 180 and Latvia 178.

The DRC and Liberia are expected to push for key pan-African priorities, including pressing for support for the AU's peace and security efforts, challenging terrorism in the **Sahel** and **Gulf of Guinea**, controlling the flow of small arms, and fighting climate change. In addition, the DRC is likely to use its seat to advance national interests, particularly by pushing for greater international action to end the conflict in its eastern region and possibly calling for sanctions against Rwanda for its alleged involvement part in the conflict.

### Planner

27 Jun 2025 **(DRC)** Signing of DRC-Rwanda peace agreement;  
 2025 **(DRC)** Constitution review process to start;  
 2025 **Kinshasa (DRC)** Withdrawal of the **Southern African Development Community (SADC) Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (SAMIDRC)** peacekeeping forces from DRC;  
 1 Jan 2026 – 1 Jan 2028 **(DRC)** DRC to serve on the **United Nations Security Council (UNSC)**;

### Chronology

22 Jun 2025 **Kinshasa (DRC)** *Bloomberg*. The DRC extends a temporary ban on cobalt exports by three months, prolonging its efforts to rein in a surplus on the international market;  
 19 Jun 2025 **Kinshasa (DRC)** *Senenews*. DRC and **Rwanda** are expected to formally sign a **United States (US)**- and **Qatar**-mediated peace agreement on 27 June in the **United States** following the initialling of a draft accord on 18 June;  
 17 Jun 2025 **Kinshasa (DRC)** *Al Jazeera*. The **African Union (AU) Peace and Security Council (PSC)** and the **United Nations Panel of Experts on the DRC** raise concerns about **Uganda's** expanding military presence in eastern DRC and possible ulterior motives beyond combating the **ADF** rebel group;  
 14 Jun 2025 **Kinshasa (DRC)** *AP*. Authorities say major flooding hit several neighbourhoods in Kinshasa, killing at least 19 people and causing severe damage;  
 12 Jun 2025 **Kinshasa (DRC)** *Mining Review*. **DRC Mining Week 2025** continues in Kinshasa, aimed at promoting DRC as a global mining leader;  
 12 Jun 2025 **Kinshasa (DRC)** *Bloomberg*. **Canada**-headquartered miner **Ivanhoe Mines** reports seismic activity that disrupted output at its copper mine in the DRC appears self-induced;

<sup>11</sup> Reuters, 3 Jun 2025

<sup>12</sup> United Nations News, 3 Jun 2025

<sup>13</sup> Reuters, 3 Jun 2025

<sup>14</sup> United Nations News, 3 Jun 2025

<sup>15</sup> Reuters, 3 Jun 2025

11 Jun 2025 **Kinshasa (DRC)** *Bloomberg*. **Canada**-headquartered miner **Ivanhoe Mines** restarts underground operations in part of its copper mine in the DRC while another section remains offline after seismic activity caused flooding deep below ground;

9 Jun 2025 **Kinshasa (DRC)** *La Prosperite*. Opposition party **Conservateurs de la Nature et Démocrates** president **Moïse Moni Della** calls for the replacement of the ruling **Sacred Union of the Nation** with a new political coalition, the **Camp of the Nation**, to rally support around President **Félix Tshisekedi** amid growing unrest in eastern DRC;

8 Jun 2025 **Kinshasa (DRC)** *Reuters*. **Rwanda** confirms it will withdraw from the **Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS)**, underscoring diplomatic tensions in the region over an offensive this year by Rwanda-backed **M23** rebels in eastern Congo.

7 Jun 2025 **Kinshasa (DRC)** *La Prosperite*. **United Nations (UN)** member states elects five countries, including DRC, to serve as a non-permanent member of the **United Nations Security Council (UNSC)**;

5 Jun 2025 **Kinshasa (DRC)** *La Prosperite*. Opposition party **Engagement pour la Citoyenneté et le Développement** leader **Martin Fayulu** declares that there is no military solution to the crisis in eastern DRC and insists on inclusive national dialogue as the only viable path to peace;

2 Jun 2025 **Kinshasa (DRC)** *Reuters*. **United States**-headquartered **Human Rights Watch** reports that **Rwanda**-backed **M23** rebels allegedly executed at least 21 civilians in **Goma (North Kivu Province)** over two days in February;

29 May 2025 **Goma (DRC)** *AP News*. Former president **Joseph Kabila**, accused of supporting **Rwanda**-backed **M23** rebels, meets with religious leaders in Goma (**North Kivu Province**) in his first public appearance since his immunity was lifted amid a treason investigation;

27 May 2025 **Kinshasa (DRC)** *La Prosperite*. Residents report that bandits known as **Kulunus** are terrorising the **Kimbwala** neighbourhood in Kinshasa by throwing stones at homes and causing fear among residents, who are now urging authorities to restore order;

25 May 2025 **Kinshasa (DRC)** *Financial Times*. Officials are reportedly optimistic about reaching a mineral deal with the **United States (US)** by the end of June, which would promote US investment in the critical minerals sector alongside US support to end the **Rwanda**-backed **M23** conflict;

23 May 2025 **Kinshasa (DRC)** *Financial Times*. Former president **Joseph Kabila** criticises his successor, **Felix Tshisekedi**, after the senate strips Kabila of immunity from prosecution amid allegations he's supporting armed rebellion in eastern DRC;

21 May 2025 **Kinshasa (DRC)** *Reuters*. Constitutional court sentences, in absentia, former prime minister **Augustin Matata Ponyo** to ten years of forced labour and former **Banque Centrale du Congo** (central bank) governor **Deogratias Mutombo** to five years for their involvement in embezzling \$245m from the **Bukanga-Lonzo Agro-Industrial Park Project**;

20 May 2025 **Kinshasa (DRC)** *Reuters*. **China's CMOC Group**, the world's top cobalt miner, calls on the DRC last week to lift a ban on exports of the battery metal, which is currently due to expire next month.

### About Africa Risk Consulting:

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Please contact us by email [info@africariskconsulting.com](mailto:info@africariskconsulting.com)

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