

AFRICA RISK CONSULTING

DRC Monthly Briefing September 2025

DRC Summary 11 September 2025

The Office of the United Nations Human Rights Office (OHCHR) in a report published on 5 September accuses both soldiers and rebels in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) of committing serious abuses. Banque Centrale du Congo's (BCC) (central bank) new governor, André Wameso, steps into the role on 4 August with an ambitious goal of restoring confidence in the Congolese franc and reducing the country's overwhelming dependence on the United States (US) dollar. The DRC government on 27 August grants seven exploration permits to the United States (US)-based KoBold Metals to search for lithium and other minerals.

United Nations says war crimes widespread in eastern Congo

The **Office of the United Nations Human Rights Office (OHCHR)**, in a [report](#) published on 5 September, accused both soldiers and rebels in eastern **Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)** of committing serious abuses, including executions, kidnappings and attacks on schools and hospitals. The **United Nations (UN)** stated that these acts may constitute crimes under international law and called for a commission of inquiry. The report covers the conflict between January and July 2025, as the **Rwanda-backed M23** rebels expanded their occupation in eastern DRC, prompting a military response by the **Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo (FARDC)** (armed forces of the DRC) and allied militias. The M23's capture of the mineral-rich hubs of **Goma (North Kivu Province)** and **Bukavu (South Kivu Province)** has left more than 7,000 people dead and displaced thousands more.

However, the UN found that all sides in the conflict were responsible for widespread human-rights abuses. It said M23 rebels carried out summary executions, torture, enforced disappearances and sexual violence in areas under its control, while Congolese soldiers themselves committed widespread sexual violence and looting during retreats. The report also highlighted the government's collaboration with abusive non-state armed groups, some with ties to the perpetrators of Rwanda's 1994 genocide, warning that this legitimisation of militias without oversight undermines the fight against impunity. The UN [described](#) the escalation as leading to a near "total collapse of the rule of law" in North and South Kivu.

Rwanda denies supporting M23, which claims it is defending the rights of **Tutsis** and other **Kinyarwanda** speakers in the DRC, while peace talks, backed by the **United States (US)** and **Qatar**, have recently stalled as violence continues (*See ARC DRC August 2025*). The UN stressed that lasting peace will be impossible without justice and reparations for victims of all parties, urging both sides to confront their human rights records directly and meaningfully.

New central bank governor wants to reduce US dollar reliance

Banque Centrale du Congo's (BCC) (central bank) new governor, **André Wameso**, [assumed](#) his responsibilities on 4 August, with an ambitious goal of restoring confidence in the Congolese franc and reducing the country's dependence on the **United States (US)** dollar, used for nearly 90% of local transactions. However, this is a [daunting task](#) given that the DRC remains damaged by years of hyperinflation in the 1990s and the extreme volatility of the franc, currently trading near an all-time low of \$1/CDF 2876. Almost all the country's export revenues from copper, cobalt, gold and oil are also dollar-denominated. It is also often used to pay airport taxes, rent and restaurant bills. While the government pays salaries in francs, it is usually immediately converted to the US currency.

In his first interview since his appointment by [presidential decree](#) on 23 July, Wameso [told](#) US media house **Bloomberg** on 22 August that the government cannot “*build a new Congo with a currency other than the national currency*”. He attributed the dollarisation of the local economy to the fact that the country imports almost all goods consumed domestically. Currently, even internal payments in US dollars are routed through correspondent banks abroad, creating delays and raising costs. To change this dynamic, Wameso said he is working with the US **Treasury** to create a domestic clearing house for US dollar transactions. He further envisions broader reforms to further encourage Congolese citizens to hold and use the franc. This includes launching local-currency securities to build a yield curve, offering opportunities for individuals, and not just banks, to invest in government debt.

Wameso’s plan further involves developing an entire franc-based financial ecosystem that will include mortgages, pensions and a capital market capable of issuing corporate bonds. He also wants the housing sector tied more closely to the franc, with construction materials and financing denominated locally. Wameso further said that part of his strategy is to harness the DRC’s vast gold reserves, often a source of smuggling and conflict, into the formal economy, including through a proposed refinery in **Kinshasa**, to strengthen reserves and build trust in the franc.

Wameso takes over from **Malangu Kabedi Mbuyi**, who left behind a healthier macroeconomic position with record foreign reserves and inflation falling toward the 7% target. With this stability, Wameso is considering Congo’s first interest-rate cut in over three years. Though close to President **Félix Tshisekedi** (2019-present), with whom he has been friends with since the 1990s, Wameso stresses that central bank independence remains essential, being one of the key priorities of the DRC’s \$1.7 billion **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** programme. Despite his new role, he remains one of Tshisekedi’s lead negotiators on peace and development deals with **Rwanda** and in talks with the US on minerals and infrastructure.

Wameso, who studied business engineering with a focus on finance at the **Catholic University of Louvain in Belgium**, [established](#) a strong career in the financial sector before moving into senior political roles. He previously managed risk at DRC-headquartered **Rawbank** and Belgium-headquartered **Dexia Investment Company** and later served as director of internal audit at Dexia Holding, where he was responsible for internal controls, compliance, and international risk assessment. Though clearly highly skilled and experienced, Wameso faces a formidable challenge in reshaping the DRC’s financial landscape and restoring trust in the franc amidst entrenched dollarisation and deep-rooted economic fragility.

Government grants major US company rights to explore lithium in the DRC

The government on 27 August [granted](#) seven exploration permits to the **United States (US)**-based **KoBold Metals** to search for lithium and other minerals in DRC. KoBold, backed by US billionaires **Jeff Bezos**, **Bill Gates** and **Michael Bloomberg**, applied for the licenses in July shortly after signing an exploration deal, which the DRC presidency said seeks to “*open the way to American investments*” in the domestic mining sector. Four of the permits are in **Manono** territory (**Tanganyika Province**), while three others are located in **Malemba Nkulu** territory (**Haut-Lomami Province**).

The Tanganyika [permit](#) is near the Manono lithium site, which possesses one of the world’s largest hard-rock lithium deposits. The rights allow the company to prospect for minerals in Manono, including lithium, manganese, tin and tantalum. Kobold also informed the government that it still needs to settle an ongoing dispute with **Australian** miner, **AVZ Minerals**, before it can proceed with its \$1 billion plan for Manono. AVZ claims that the DRC illegally terminated its rights to develop the project and has initiated arbitration proceedings against the government.

KoBold reached a preliminary deal with AVZ Minerals on 7 May to move forward with the development of the Manono deposit project (*See ARC DRC May 2025*). The framework agreement allows Kobold to buy AVZ’s stake in Manono. However, the deal is subject to the resolution of multiple arbitration cases surrounding the lithium deposits. AVZ was about to break ground on the Manono mine construction in 2023 when authorities cancelled its rights and split the permit, handing part of it to **China’s** mining giant, **Zijin Mining Group**. AVZ said in 2020 that it planned to build a mine capable

of producing about 700,000 tonnes of lithium concentrate a year for two decades, making it the largest operation of its kind outside Australia. Reaching a final deal with AVZ will be pivotal for KoBold, as it would secure access to one of the world's largest untapped lithium deposits and strengthen US efforts to reduce reliance on Chinese supply chains.

The push by KoBold, whose [shareholders](#) include Australian miner **BHP Group**, US-headquartered **Andreessen Horowitz**, and Norway-headquartered **Equinor**, comes as the DRC and the US governments negotiate a strategic partnership to spur more mining investment by US companies. Although US mining companies last operated in the DRC in 2016, KoBold's deal with AVZ signals that the government's push for greater US involvement in the DRC is beginning to pan out. The DRC is vital to the US' strategy to compete in the critical minerals race with China, which dominates the Congo's mining sector and operate the majority of DRC's mines, a key component in China's dominance in critical minerals. Besides lithium, the DRC produces more than 70% of the world's cobalt, which is used for batteries in electric vehicles and phones. The country also has significant reserves of elements such as germanium, used in semiconductors.

Planner

2025 **(DRC)** Presidential signing of DRC-Rwanda peace agreement;
 2025 **(DRC)** Final signing of DRC-M23 peace agreement;
 2025 **(DRC)** Constitutional 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

10 Sep 2025 **Kinshasa (DRC)** *Bloomberg*. State-owned miner **Gecamines** signs a collaboration agreement with **Kazakhstan's Eurasian Resources Group**, a step toward ending years of conflict between the two companies;
 10 Sep 2025 **Kinshasa (DRC)** *Reuters*. Officials said towns affected by the country's latest Ebola outbreak have erected checkpoints to restrict population movements, as cases increased slightly and aid workers warned that the response was underfunded;
 10 Sep 2025 **Kinshasa (DRC)** *BBC*. Authorities say that the **Ugandan** Islamist group, **Allied Democratic Forces (ADF)**, have killed at least 89 people in eastern DRC;
 8 Sep 2025 **Uvira (DRC)** *Africanews*. Hundreds protest against the recent appointment of General **Olivier Gasita Mukunda** as deputy commander of the 33rd military region of the **Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo (FARDC)** (armed forces of the DRC), accusing him of having collaborated with the **Rwanda-backed M23** rebels during the seizure of **Bukavu (South Kivu Province)** in February;
 6 Sep 2025 **Kinshasa (DRC)** *X. United Nations (UN) Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights* says **M23** rebels, Congolese armed forces and other armed groups have committed serious rights violations in eastern DRC;
 5 Sep 2025 **Kinshasa (DRC)** *Bloomberg*. The **World Health Organization (WHO)** says that Mpox is no longer a global health emergency, but more needs to be done to eradicate the sometimes deadly virus;
 4 Sep 2025 **Kinshasa (DRC)** *France24*. Health authorities in the DRC declare a new outbreak of the Ebola virus, which has killed 15 people since the end of August;
 3 Sep 2025 **Kinshasa (DRC)** *Reuters*. The **United States (US)** state department says in a joint statement that **Qatar**, the US, **Togo** and the **African Union (AU) Commission** participated in

the second joint oversight committee meeting for the peace agreement between the DRC and **Rwanda**;

2 Sep 2025 **Kinshasa (DRC) SABC**. A **United Nations (UN)** peacekeeping source says peacekeeping missions are under severe financial pressure and **United States (US)** cuts could limit their ability to protect civilians in places like **South Sudan** and the DRC;

1 Sep 2025 **Kinshasa (DRC) SABC**. The **Congo River Alliance**, a coalition of Congolese insurgent groups that includes the **M23** rebels, accuse the government of violating agreements aimed at ending conflict in eastern DRC;

27 Aug 2025 **Kinshasa (DRC) Reuters**. Government grants **United States**-based **KoBold Metals**, backed by US businessman **Jeff Bezos** and **Bill Gates**, seven permits to explore lithium and other minerals in the DRC;

26 Aug 2025 **Kinshasa (DRC) Africanews**. The DRC summons a significant number of senior military officials for questioning following a series of battlefield defeats against **M23** rebels in the volatile eastern region;

23 Aug 2025 **Kinshasa (DRC) La Prosperite**. Prime minister **Judith Suminwa** meets with her **Ivorian** counterpart **Robert Beugré Mambé** during the **9th Tokyo International Conference on African Development** conference to strengthen bilateral cooperation;

22 Aug 2025 **Kinshasa (DRC) Bloomberg**. **United Nations and UN Security Council (UNSC)** members warn that security in eastern DRC is deteriorating amid numerous conflicts, including clashes between **Rwanda**-backed **M23** rebels and the **Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo (FARDC)** (armed forces of the DRC);

22 Aug 2025 **Kinshasa (DRC) Reuters**. **Rwanda** rejects accusations that Kigali-backed **M23** rebels massacred hundreds of people in the east of DRC in July, saying there was no credible evidence to support the claims.

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