

# POPULAR UPRISING & POLITICAL STABILITY IN THE DRC

## A Chronology of the Pre-Electoral Crisis

2015

January



National assembly amends electoral law, to move from regular to permanent voter registration.

19 & 21 January

Protests against the amendment break out in Kinshasa, Goma, Bukavu, and Lubumbashi resulting in 30 deaths.

Communications are cut off for 20 days

The National Assembly withdraws the amendment

November

Moise Katumbi leaves the presidential party

28 November



Joseph Kabila calls for a national dialogue to focus on elections, security concerns and territorial divisions.

March



At a Filimbi and Lucha seminar in Kinshasa, 26 participants are arrested

14 September

7 parties write an open letter to the President denouncing 'attempts to revise or change the constitution'. They are immediately excluded from government.



20 December

The Citizen Front is created -- a platform which brings together civil society and the political opposition to enforce government respect for the constitution and the holding of elections before the end of 2016.

2016



April

Edem Kodjo is appointed as the facilitator of the dialogue by the African Union, opposition party members are attacked in Lubumbashi, and a pro-Katumbi demonstration in Lubumbashi is dispersed by police with tear gas. 4 are arrested.

30 March



The G7 designate opposition leader Katumbi as its preferred presidential candidate

4 - 20 May

An inquiry is set up targeting Katumbi, he is placed under provisional arrest and authorised by the prosecutor to receive medical care abroad. Katumbi leaves the DRC.



July

Tshisekedi returns to Kinshasa.

A section of the opposition rejects Kodjo as facilitator of the National Dialogue.

20 August



A period of sixteen months and a day is announced to complete voter registration. It is projected to take until July 2017.

June

During Kabila's 45th birthday celebration, the leadership announces the possible lengthening of the presidential term.



Opposition parties make a written commitment at the 'Rassemblement' in Brussels requiring prerequisites for the National dialogue:

- Respecting the Constitution, launching elections
- Discontinuing legal proceedings against opposition members
- Liberalising the media
- Releasing political prisoners
- Requiring that Kabila steps down by 19 December.



Katumbi is sentenced to 3 years in prison by a court of peace in Lubumbashi for a property theft case, making him ineligible to run in this election.

## Scenario 1: Attrition & stalemate

The political stalemate endures and the opposition stands its ground

Religious authorities stand in as mediators of the crisis



The youth accuses the Catholic Church of collusion, and lapse permanently

Divisions arise within the Church



Inflation rises, reducing the population's purchasing power

Insecurity in East persists

Recurrent demonstrations are held despite protest bans, on symbolic dates (Sept, Nov, Dec 2016)



Divisions arise in student and citizen movements

The regime uses these internal divides to its advantage and uses violent repression

The opposition is no longer a force for change

Katumbi steps down

The regime alternates between compromise and repression

2018

## Assumptions

1 Tshisekedi remains alive during the period, as do other political figures such as Kabila and Katumbi.

2 There are no terrorist attacks claimed by the Islamic State or Al Qaeda in the DRC over the next two year period.

3 Ethnic divisions are not used as a tool in the political crisis.

4 No major changes in leadership occur in the DRC's neighbouring states.

## Scenario 2: Spiral of Chaos

The political situation is ambiguous and tactics are dictated by self-interest.

Generalised rejection of politics.

Kabila remains impassive and imposes restrictions on civil liberties and uses repression to maintain power.

Insecurity in the East persists, and Kabila's clan is blamed.



A proposal is made to the National Assembly to impose a state of emergency.

Student movements sustain their momentum and grow using social networks.



The Church and the opposition fall silent.

One more massacre in the East combined with a nominal rise in prices, a repressive action or the introduction of a state of emergency trigger a mass uprising.

Frustrations erupt.

As Kabila perceives a loss of control, he lets his army loose on the population.

Urban violence and widespread looting ransack infrastructure.

2018

The opposition loses momentum.



Uprisings become irregular and with time the movements decelerate.

No major change is expected for the end of the period.

The international community are violently targeted and there is urban displacement of populations.



Markets are cut off and the economy slows.



Kabila maintains power and presents himself as the country's saviour.