

DRC Domestic Broadcasting, 23 April, 2011 (16 May– 22 May, 2011)

by Marie Lamensch, MIGS Reporter for the DRC

Government-owned media

(Xinhua/New China News Agency domestic service, official Chinese news agency, Beijing, 1859gmt, dated 18 May 2011, in Chinese)

“China's UN envoy calls for continued support to DR Congo government”

- The Chinese permanent representative to the UN told the Security Council that the Congo is still facing security and economic problems, and therefore urged the international community to provide “realistic assistance” to the government
- Li Baodong explained that Monusco should continue provide funding and logistics but also added that all parties should respect the Congolese law, Congolese people and the sovereignty of the Congo.
- While the military situation has improved, remaining rebel forces are still causing trouble in the east and SSR processes are proceeding slowly. The UN should therefore provide sufficient training and logistical assistance in order to improve the capacity of the military and the police. Economic development and investment will only be possible if the security situation improves. Particular attention has to be paid to the country’s natural resources, which are still heavily exploited by rebel forces.

(Agence France Presse, Paris, article dated 19 May 2011, in French)

France opposes cuts in UN troops numbers in DR Congo ahead of elections

- After Congolese Cooperation minister suggested it was time to withdraw the Monusco, France said it is not the time to reduce the mission before the general elections in November. Foreign Ministry spokesman Bernard Valero said the UN mission should stay in order to provide logistical support and security to unstable regions. Cuts already took place in 2010 and Monusco needs all resources necessary to achieve its goals, especially considering remaining insecurity in the east.

Privately-owned newspapers

(Le Potentiel, privately-owned daily, article dated 16 May, 2011, in French)

“Elections 2011 : opposition et pouvoir, tous d’accord”

- Both the opposition and the government agree on the maintenance of the electoral calendar presented by CENI in late April. In both camps, some had been calling for a new transition. This would have plunged the DRC into a new infernal cycle.
- The UDPS has become an official contender but has decried delays in the CENI’s electoral process. CENI is currently finding it difficult to adapt to the influx of citizens

wishing to register for the elections. Nonetheless, UDPS' president said this was no reason to disavow the body or to change the electoral calendar. He called on the organizers to reestablish order in its structures so as to give all Congolese a chance to go to the polls. The party also said it would send monitors to different registration centres

- The president of the party said his candidacy should be a symbol of the Congolese's commitment to go to the polls to guarantee the transparency of the process
- The government, meanwhile, has rejected any form of compromise on power-sharing or on the electoral process. According to Lambert Mende, the elections remain a priority. A new transition would signify abandoning the democratic ambitions of the Congolese
- Contrary to the ICG, all parties agree to swear by the electoral calendar, despite difficulties

(Le Potentiel, privately-owned daily, article dated 19 May, 2011, in French)

“Goma : l'appartenance ethnique domine les élections estudiantines”

- Student elections in Goma are being used by political leaders of the “Big North” and the “Little South” (within the student organization ISC) to fight their battles. The elections reflect inter-communal tensions in North Kivu. Both parties want their candidates to have a second mandate, although mandates are usually restricted to one academic year.
- Students have been arrested and the university damaged. Classes have now been suspended by the governor of the province who said the situation was “very bad.”

(Le Potentiel, privately-owned daily, article dated 19 May, 2011, in French)

“La lutte contre le trafic illicite des armes légères en RDC au cœur d'un atelier”

- Illicit arms trade is still a major problem in the DRC, leading PNUD and the Cadre de concertation sur les armes légères et la violence armée (CAVA) to set up a program meant to reduce small arms proliferation.
- The authorities of the Great Lakes Region have acknowledged that increasing political tensions, poverty and terrorists acts facilitate arms trafficking.

(Le Potentiel, privately-owned daily, article dated 19 May, 2011, in French)

“Après l'incursion de l'armée angolaise au Bas-Congo, La Monusco évalue la situation sécuritaire à Tshela” by Ludi Cardoso

- The presence of Angola soldiers on Congolese soil has led Monusco to investigate the security situation in Tshela, Bas Congo. Monusco spokesperson lieutenant-colonel Félix Prosper Basse said incidents caused by Angolan soldiers in the region have led to the displacement of local populations.
- A report has shown that the FARDC and Angolan troops are collaborating against Front for the Liberation of the Enclave of Cabinda
- In Equatorial province, the FARDC and Monusco have deployed more troops after rumour of possible attacks by militia men in Dongo and Mbandaka

- In Ituri, Monusco is still supporting the FARDC in its operations in Lubero, where PARECO Mai Mai continues to be active.

(Radio Candip, community radio broadcasting funded by Belgian NGO, Bunia, 1530 gmt, 19 May, 2011, in French)

- Military sources found the beheaded body of a soldier in Bunia town.

(Le Potentiel, privately-owned daily, article dated 20 May, 2011, in French)

“Sud-Kivu : les FDLR attaquent deux agents de la CENI à Fizi” by Pitshou Mulumba

- Attacks on two CENI representatives in Fizi illustrate the continued insecurity caused by the FDLR in the region and call into question the securitization of the electoral process.
- Civil society said the FARDC was as much as a security problem as the FDLR. Several elements of the Congolese forces have looted villages, while unknown armed combatants attack at night. Civil society therefore called for the deployment of joint FARDC-police and Monusco forces

(Le Potentiel, privately-owned daily, article dated 20 May, 2011, in French)

“Sud-Kivu : la Monusco lance l’opération « Akikisha Usalama »”

- Monusco has launched a new operation named “Akikisha Usalama” in South-Kivu. The goal is to securitize vulnerable areas and to improve the protection of civilians during a period of reform and restructuring of the FARDC. According to Monusco, the proactive operation has already shown positive results as displaced populations have started to come back to their villages.
- Other operations, Falcon Eye and Tiger Paw in Dungu and Doruma, have also been efficient and allowed for the neutralization of negative forces in Haut Uélé. Two child soldiers were taken away from the LRA.

(Le Potentiel, privately-owned daily, article dated 20 May, 2011, in French)

“La RDC et la Somalie, armées à profusion”

- Arms proliferation is still a major issue in the Congo and help fuel conflict. According to two research projects conducted by SIPRI, a Swedish research centre specialized in arms trafficking, Somalia and the DRC have been both widely involved in small arms proliferation
- Despite a 2003 arms embargo, a large quantity of small arms, ammunition and artillery come from Tanzania, Burundi and Rwanda. The government meanwhile has been getting weapons from the Ukraine, North Korea and China, and material is being transported through Sudan. Joseph Kabila has refused to notify the sales to the Sanction Committee of the UN.

(Radio Candip, community radio broadcasting funded by Belgian NGO, Bunia, 1530 gmt, 21 May, 2011, in French)

- In Mahagi Territory, north of Bunia, the UNDP visited several development projects meant to help former combatants to reintegrate civil society.
- Administrative representatives from Bas Uele District reported that 20 people were abducted by the LRA in Ango Territory. Three of them returned to their villages two days later. Residents fear further attacks after the LRA injured residents, looted and destroyed houses and abducted civilians on Thursday 18 May.

(Le Potentiel, privately-owned daily, article dated 21 May, 2011, in French)

“La France s’oppose à la réduction des effectifs de la Monusco”

- France is against the reduction of Monusco troops in the DRC, arguing that the security situation still too fragile, especially in the east. The forthcoming elections are a further reason why Monusco should stay in order to ensure fairness, freedom and stability.
- The French National Assembly recently organized a forum on the elections in the DRC. Several organizations were present. The International Crisis Group published a worrying report on the current electoral process and decried the lack of transparency. The ICG said the situation could easily slip into violence. The president of the American NGO said the electoral calendar was experiencing major delays

(Le Potentiel, privately-owned daily, article dated 21 May, 2011, in French)

“La CENI et la Monusco visitent les centres d’inscription dans la partie Est de Kinshasa”

Ludi Cardoso

Par Le Potentiel

- CENI and Monusco have visited several registration centers in Masina, N’Djili and N’Sele. The process is apparently running well, especially in eastern Kinshasa and the Congolese capital in general. New electoral kits have been received in order to reinforce operations and create new registration centers.

(Le Potentiel, privately-owned daily, article dated 21 May, 2011, in French)

“Sud-Kivu : la population satisfaite du redéploiement des FARDC à Kigoma”

Mulumba

Par Le Potentiel

- The population in Uvira, South Kivu, is pleased about the deployment of FARDC elements. Several attacks by armed militias, particularly the Mai Mai and the FDLR, had led to greater insecurity.
- Lieutenant colonel Héritier Byamungu has deplored bad road infrastructure in the region, which impedes transport of logistical material

Special issue

International Crisis Group Report Summary Congo: The Electoral Dilemma (Africa Report N°175, 5 May 2011)

<http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/africa/central-africa/dr-congo/175-congo-the-electoral-dilemma.aspx>

Main report only available in French

- The electoral and democratic process is facing major challenges. Opposition parties have failed to unite and the government is in an impasse: respect the constitutional deadline and hold poorly-organized elections, or ignore the deadline and hold unconstitutional powers.
- According to ICG the only way out of this besides speeding up preparations, is to negotiate an emergency electoral calendar and government to manage the transition period. The process should also be more transparent and inclusive, and security must be improved with the help of the UN
- The ICG believes that foreign partners should disengage if these conditions are not fulfilled or they would give legitimacy to a flawed process.
- The elections could further destabilize the country. While Kabila has already started his electoral campaign, opposition parties are still trying to find candidates. Kabila's opponents have also face intimidation.
- In terms of logistics, the presidential election's run-off round was removed, making it a single winner-takes-all round system. Other pro-ruling party electoral law changes are being discussed
- Insecurity is high in the Kivus due to poor DDR processes.
- The National Independent Electoral Commission (NIEC) was set up a year later than expected, leading to major delays in terms of voters' list, registration and budget
- The international community is limited but provides 40% of the funding as well as technical assistance. Monusco is still maintains a presence. The international community should be more vocal and put pressure politicians to post-pone the elections. According to the ICG, a new Special Envoys for the U.S., France and EU should be appointed, and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the UN should play a bigger role.
- Technical and financial assistance should be given only based on "freedom to campaign, respect for political pluralism, political violence, access to state media, dialogue with the Congolese authorities and state funding for the NIEC"