



**MONUC
Press Review**

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One day before the end of the technical committees session in Pretoria, the headlines of the local press in Kinshasa today alternate between pessimism and optimism as far as the outcome of the consultations is concerned.

LE PHARE announces *“yesterday’s session marked a crucial point in the slow progression of the Inter Congolese negotiations towards a consensus”*. According to the paper, at the conclusion of the consultations by the members of the two committees (the army and the constitutional) with the mediation, *“fifteen minutes were enough to sort out the outstanding details relating to the military issues while discussions on the constitutional issues took 3 hours fifteen minutes”*. The paper reports that *“one of the most notable breakthroughs achieved at the military level is the acceptance by most experts, of the principle on the formation of a neutral force tasked to ensure the security of the institutions and the transition players”*. The paper adds that this force contingent should consist of 3,200 troops to be deployed in Kinshasa as well as in the main cities. *“Additional strengths could join the neutral force if the need arises”*, the paper adds.

LA TEMPETE DES TROPIQUES indicates that the mediation’s proposal requesting 3,200 troops to ensure the security of Kinshasa and a joint new army staff, led by a FAC officer assisted by one RCD officer and one MLC officer, has already been accepted by MLC. *“RCD will wholeheartedly agree with MLC since both movements are on the point of securing a smooth demilitarization of Kinshasa”*, the paper says.

LE REVELATEUR, in turn, announces that the government dismissed the deployment of an international force in Kinshasa. *“Kinshasa delegation has remained intransigent regarding the deployment of an international neutral force in Kinshasa...they stick to the joint police force and the close protection units”*, the paper writes, further indicating that Kinshasa has also flatly turned down the idea of having the president sworn in for a second time in accordance with the draft constitution that provides for, among others, that prior to assuming their functions, the president and his four vice-presidents should be sworn in before the Supreme Court of Justice. For the government *“Joseph Kabila having already been accepted by all the parties to the crisis as president during the transition does not have to be sworn in for a second time”*, the paper reports.

LE POTENTIEL, feels that the government is in a difficult position, *“being the only party opposed to the two provisions accepted by all the other parties...”*. Owing to this government position, *“the delegates in Pretoria are worried that the government can, at any time, block the process in response to the current developments”*, the paper notes.

L’AVENIR describes the draft constitution proposed by the mediation as a *“constitution-bomb”* that *“sheds more confusion rather than the expected light”*. The paper considers this constitution as *“a coup d’Etat against Joseph Kabila, planned by Moustapha Niasse, in collusion with the two rebel movements”*.

LE PALMARES proposes the same analysis, indicating that *“the draft transition constitution (is) like “a small bomb that can explode at any time”*.

Imminent End of the Inter Congolese Dialogue scheduled for 15 March, announces, in turn, LA REFERENCE PLUS, echoing what it called Masire’s revelation (Facilitator of the Inter Congolese Dialogue) to Museveni (Ugandan president). The paper reminds that both men met last weekend in Kampala. The Facilitator revealed *“the end of the dialogue is imminent”*. During the final plenary the Facilitator *“will reconcile the warring sons and daughters of the DRC since 1998...”*, he declared.

Furthermore, LA TEMPETE DES TROPIQUES announces a thaw in Bunia after the unrest following the assassination of the two UPC soldiers blamed on some soldiers of the Ugandan army. *“Monuc intervention was required to ease tension in this town in the East of the DRC”*, the paper reports.

In the same region, RCD and MLC are said to be surprised by the silence of the international community over the death of 300 people killed in the attack launched on Bogoro, according to Thomas Lubanga, leader of the UPC, by *“Kinshasa army and its RCD-ML allies”*. RCD calls upon the *“UN Secretary-General and the Security Council to urgently obtain the disengagement of the FAC regiments in the Northeast of the DRC, as well as a total withdrawal of foreign forces”*, while MLC says to be surprised by the little reaction on the part of Monuc and demands *“that urgently be set up a committee to probe into the gross human rights abuses, determine the perpetrators and bring them to the international court of Justice”*.
