



MONUC Press Review

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The Inter Congolese Technical Committees session continues in Pretoria while in Kinshasa ambassadors of the Security Council member countries have called for an unconditional cease-fire in Ituri. The papers published in Kinshasa this 25 February broadly comment on both events.

Niasse opens the committees' session and convenes the plenary for 5 March, announces LA TEMPETE DES TROPIQUES, adding that the United Nations mediator has called on the Constitutional Committee members as well as those of the Defense and Security Committees to swiftly harmonize their views on the issues addressed. According to the paper, the deadline set for each committee to resolve the differences is 3 March after which the plenary session is scheduled to take place on 5 March. *"The final session to be convened by the facilitator Ketumile Masire is doubtless contingent upon the outcome of the Inter Congolese dialogue"*, indicates the paper.

L'OBSERVATEUR reports Moustapha Niasse wished to remind the delegates that during the forum *"renegotiating the Pretoria global and inclusive agreement would be out of the question"*.

LA REFERENCE PLUS foresees, in turn, some big vagueness for the consecutive negotiations. According to the daily, *"the session opened in a tense atmosphere, in the absence of the RCD delegation, punctuated with a long series of grievances addressed to each other by the belligerents"*. The paper further indicates that the grievances will be discussed with the mediator in separate meetings.

LE POTENTIEL touches on this issue from the same angle and maintains that the technical committees begin their session against the background of differences. The paper notes that in light of the interviews given by the different protagonists *"the belligerents have remained divided on the issues about the army, security and constitution"*. About the army, the daily reveals that RCD refers to the *"formation of an army whose core will consist of elements from the FAC, the RCD and MLC armed forces"*; the government says it will be an *"integrated and restructured army ...but not a merger"*, while MLC warns that *"if this issue is not resolved, Pretoria forum will be a waste of time and money"*. The paper also foresees some stormy debates on the status of the armed forces in the Kinshasa garrison, the role of the UN foreign troops in the protection of institutions and their players and the format of the possible forces tasked to ensure the security.

In another development, LE REVELATEUR announces that the 7 Political Opposition candidates for the vice-presidency are in battle order. *“ The designation of the opposition candidate for the vice-presidency promises to make waves when we recall the many trials of strength that break out every time the politicians have to make decisions involving their personal interests”.*

Most papers today echo the declaration of ambassadors of the UN Security Council member countries accredited to the DRC calling for the pacification of Ituri *“ The ambassadors called for all the parties carrying out military activities in the Ituri region to immediately sign and comply with an unconditional cease-fire for the cessation of the military activities”.* The ambassadors further called for an immediate implementation of the Ituri Pacification Committee and remind all the parties in the region of their obligation to allow MONUC and the humanitarian organizations full and complete access to the populations in territories under their control.
