



SUMMARY. Following the conviction of opposition leader Jean-Bertrand Ewanga for insulting the President, there was an escalation of public protest against any constitutional change that would allow President Joseph Kabila to run for a third term in office.

On the security front, the Rwandan FDLR rebels and various small Congolese rebel militias continued their attacks on each other and on villages in eastern Congo.

The Canadian Parliament voted against Bill C-486, which was aimed at preventing Canadian firms from purchasing 'conflict minerals.'

The Ebola outbreak in the Congo shows signs of being contained.



POLITICS

Member of Parliament and opposition leader, Jean-Bertrand Ewanga, is convicted of insulting the President

At 9pm on September 11, Jean-Bertrand Ewanga was convicted and sentenced to 12 months in prison for insulting the President, and also for a new charge, "insulting the President of the Senate, National Assembly and the Prime Minister." The charge of "inciting racial hatred" was dropped.

Ewanga refused to defend himself and his reported last words to the judges were: "Do what you need to do and send me to Malaka [the large Kinshasa prison]... but I do not condone this travesty of justice."

The leader of the opposition, [Vital Kamerhe](#), and [other Members of Parliament](#) insist there is no crime of insulting the head of state in the Congolese Penal Code.

[France](#) and the [European Union](#) were quick to condemn the conviction.

After Ewanga's conviction, the voice of both opponents and supporters of a third term for President Kabila grew stronger

On September 28, [thousands marched](#) in Kinshasa and in Goma in eastern Congo to voice their opposition to any constitutional changes that would allow President Kabila a third term in office.

Kabila's [Minister for Information](#), Lambert Mende, says he is unaware of any efforts to remove terms limits and accuses the opposition of intentionally attempting to discredit the government.

President Joseph Kabila is half way through his second term in office and [appears to be laying the ground work](#) to continue as President after his current mandate expires in January 2017—even though the Constitution not only places a two-term limit on a president, but also specifically stipulates that the two-term limit cannot be changed.



Jean-Bertrand Ewanga



Demonstrators in Kinshasa

ARMED CONFLICT

Militias continue to spread terror in mineral-rich Katanga Province

[FULL ARTICLE](#) | Radio Okapi (en français)

While international attention remains focused on the Kivu provinces, in the southeastern mineral-rich province of [Katanga](#), marauding 'Mai Mai Katanga' rebels continue to brutally attack villages—looting, burning, and murdering. (Sept 22 2014)

President Kabila promotes General accused of selling arms to rebels

[FULL ARTICLE](#) | Africa Reuters

A re-structuring of the Congolese Army divided the country into three "zones of defence." President Joseph Kabila has named General Gabriel Amisi as the commander of one of the three zones. A 2012 UN report accuses General Amisi of supplying arms to rebel groups and criminal gangs. (Sept 20 2014)



In the Ituri region, Cobra Matata's FRPI rebel group attacks more villages

[FULL ARTICLE](#) | Radio Okapi (en français)

The FRPI is carrying out sporadic attacks against villagers in the eastern Congo province of [Ituri](#). The attacks include rape, kidnapping, looting, and murder, and to a "massive population displacement" as people seek safety. (Sept 19 2014) The FRPI rebel group emerged in [2000](#) and recently has had a resurgence of activity.

ECONOMY / MINING / NATURAL RESOURCES

Moody's anticipate 2-year growth in the DR Congo's banking

[FULL ARTICLE](#) | Reuters

While acknowledging the DR Congo's ongoing high risk environment and the potential for unseen events that could derail progress, Moody's expects a "benign operating environment" over the coming two years. The optimism for growth is also based on "quickenning economic growth, a fast-expanding mining sector and rising domestic consumption." (Sept 1 2014)

Mobile Banking gains ground in DRC

[FULL ARTICLE](#) | BizTechAfrica

In the DR Congo, banks are expensive and difficult to access for the average Congolese citizen, small business persons, and informal traders. Following the broader trend in Africa, mobile banking in the DRC is quickly becoming an appealing and feasible alternative and its rapid growth has "caught industry watchers off-guard." It is estimated that 73,000 government employees are today being paid through mobile banking. (Sept 4 2014)

Vodacom Congo to extend coverage to central DR Congo

[FULL ARTICLE](#) | BizTechAfrica

Vodacom Congo intends to install 61 new antennas in Western Kasai and diamond-rich Eastern Kasai [provinces](#). This will bring mobile phone access, and mobile banking capability, to about 15 million more people. (Sept 21 2014)



CONFLICT MINERALS

US Government says it is unable to track conflict minerals

[FULL ARTICLE](#) | Wall Street Journal

The US Department of Commerce has acknowledged that it is unable to distinguish between legal and illegal mineral processing sites in the DR Congo. Under [Section 1502](#) of the [Dodd-Frank Act](#), the Department was required to provide a list of "all known conflict mineral processing facilities around the world" by January 1st of 2013. The Commerce Department says its primary challenge is in tracking minerals produced by artisanal miners in eastern Congo. (Sept 5 2014)

Open Letter from leading Congolese and international analysts says conflict mineral legislation hurts the economy, has negligible impact on the conflict

[FULL LETTER](#) | Pole Institute, Goma, DRC

Lead by Aloys Tegera of the [Pole Institute](#) policy think tank in Goma, DRC, a group of 70 experts cautions that the conflict minerals campaign "fundamentally misunderstands the relationship between minerals and conflict in the eastern DRC." Noting that the armed rebel groups are not dependent on mineral revenue for their existence, the experts argue that the legislation's focus on international companies has left the Congo's 8–10 million artisanal miners unable to comply with—or prove compliance with—the new traceability certification rules, and consequently they are being forced to either mine illegally or lose their jobs. They conclude that this type of initiative "risks contributing to, rather than alleviating, the very conflicts they set out to address." (Sept 11 2014)

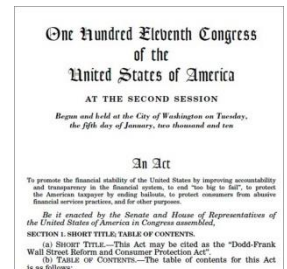
Key NGO lobby group says Dodd-Frank legislation already showing signs of success

[FULL REPORT](#) | Enough Project

A June 2014 Enough Project Report says that "many lucrative mines in eastern Congo no longer controlled by violent armed groups responsible for mass atrocities, rape, and grave violations of human rights." The Report further asserts that: "Market changes spurred by the 2010 Dodd-Frank law on conflict minerals have helped significantly reduce the involvement of armed groups in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo in the mines of three out of the four conflict minerals." (June 10 2014)

Canada's Parliament rejects Bill C-486: Conflict Minerals Act

On September 24, the House of Commons [voted against](#) proceeding further with [Bill C-486](#), Canada's 'Conflict Minerals Act' (127 votes yes vs. 146 votes no). Had it passed, the Bill would have required Canadian companies to exercise due diligence with respect to the extraction and trading of minerals from the DR Congo and other countries in Africa's Great Lakes Region to ensure that no armed group or criminal entity has benefited from any transaction involving these minerals.



Aloys Tegera



SOCIETY

Prime Minister Ponyo says Congo's Ebola crisis is "almost over"

[FULL ARTICLE](#) | IOL News South Africa

Through his Twitter account, Congolese Prime Minister Augustin Ponyo announced: "Ebola outbreak in DRC almost over. No new case recorded for nearly 10 days." (Sept 23 2014) [According to the World Health Organization this is a different strain of the Ebola virus from the one in West African countries. This is the DR Congo's seventh outbreak of Ebola since 1976.]



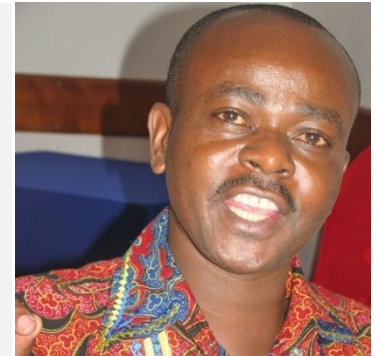
DRC Health Clinic

INTERVIEW: Janvier Murairi, Community Researcher & Mining Sector Specialist

EXERPTS BELOW | [FULL INTERVIEW](#) | Sept 29, 2014

Janvier Murairi is the President of ASSODIP, a not-for-profit organization based in eastern Congo that undertakes research and advocacy programs in support of rural populations in the [North Kivu](#) province of eastern Congo. Janvier has particular expertise in the range of socio-economic and security impacts of the mining sector on local populations, including in Bisie. He has participated in the meetings of the [OECD-ICGLR-UN Group of Experts](#) in Paris and in Kigali discussing due diligence and Conflict Minerals.

Janvier is also Acting Executive Secretary of a coalition of 11 Congolese anti-slavery organizations, and an advisor to [ADECOP](#). Previously, he served as the Chief Financial Officer for Solidarity for Social Promotion and Peace. Janvier has a university degree in legal and judicial studies.



The Bisie Tin Mine and Canada's Alphamin Mining Company

BACKGROUND

Bisie is a remote town in the Walikale district in eastern DR Congo. It has lucrative deposits of tin (cassiterite), along with coltan, diamond, uranium, cobalt, and bauxite deposits.

Since its discovery in 2004, tin has been extracted through artisanal and small-scale mining. In 2006, the Mining and Processing Congo company (MPC) was granted exploration permits for the Bisie Mine with the expectation that a large-scale mining operation would follow. In August 2011, the Canadian company [Alphamin](#) acquired a majority interest in the Bisie Tin Mine and today is the [sole owner](#).

Throughout most of the past decade, the Bisie mineral deposits have been under the physical control of various rebels groups and a [renegade brigade](#) of the Congolese Army.

Today, Alphamin awaits government permits to begin modern industrial mining of its Bisie Tin resources; however, conflicts with local artisanal miners have not yet been resolved.

Pragmora: The Bisie Tin Project has been the target of periodic protests and attacks by local artisanal miners. The latest attack in July forced Alphamin to [shut down operations](#) for two months. Why are artisanal miners angry at Alphamin? It is just a few individuals, or is this anger widespread? Do some locals think Alphamin is good for the community?

Janvier: The population of Walikale and North Kivu province does not have enough information about the approach and the policies of Alphamin. Rather, it is MPC that is better known in the area. Relations between MPC and the local community, including civil society and individual miners, have often been strained.

There are several factors at the root of this tension at the local level.

For the miners, there would be no artisanal mining zone, so many would consequently be unemployed should the company begin commercial operations. Local civil society organizations believe that MPC and Alphamin will not have policies that are truly socially responsible towards the local communities.

Several development promises have been made, but they end up being 'white elephants.' Landowners, that is, the traditional authorities and local populations of Bisie and the Bangandula tribe in particular, feel that they were not adequately consulted by the public authorities on the MPC issue.

[Interview with Janvier Murairi. Cont'd.]

In short, the exploitation of minerals by a company that considers both its interest and those of the communities--including artisanal miners—would not be rejected. It would also, in my opinion, be welcomed.

Pragmora: What do you think Alphamin could do to improve relations with the local community, in particular from local artisanal miners? To put it differently, what does the Congolese Bisie community want from its neighbour, Alphamin?

Janvier: Very simply, I believe that MPC and Alphamin should conduct public consultations with communities in Walikale and in the province to collect their wishes for the peaceful operation of Bisie Mine.

MPC and Alphamin should explain their approach to work and present the local community with a clear local development plan that takes into account the road, school, medical facilities, and so on. They need to mount a clear plan for environmental protection.

It is important that they establish a livelihood development program for alternatives to mining activities, such as agriculture. That said, they need to provide an artisanal mining zone for the artisanal miners.

Finally, MPC and Alphamin should establish, with the consent of the communities, a permanent framework for interaction with all stakeholders, and talk to those who are the landowners under traditional law and to the local traditional authorities in Bisie and consider their land claims as they feel they have been dispossessed of their ancestral lands without actually receiving anything in return.



Ndjingala near Bisie

Pragmora: There has been a lot of discussion about the [Dodd-Frank conflict minerals legislation](#) which is intended to ensure that American companies only buy minerals from the DR Congo that can be proven to be conflict-free at source and all along the supply chain to the end purchaser. How does the Dodd-Frank legislation affect artisanal miners in the Bisie area?

Janvier: Dodd-Frank emerged because it was necessary to cut the link between natural resources and the persistent conflict, even though the minerals are not the only resource that sustains the armed groups. If peace were to return, we would have to acknowledge that this law has greatly contributed to peace in the Kivus.

It is the artisanal miners who have been most adversely affected by the law. Before this law, the diggers did not truly benefit from the fruits of their labour. Before this law, how could true diggers improve their socio-economic status? Hence the need for formalizing the artisanal mining sector by establishing genuine corporations and cooperatives.

Opponents of the [Dodd-Frank] law say the economy of the province and the country has suffered greatly from this legislation. I do not share that opinion. I know Walikale, North Kivu before the law. No school infrastructure, road, or hospital was built during Bisie's boom era. It is unacceptable to me to see that the exploitation of minerals in Bisie happened alongside crushing poverty in the country.



To conclude, I would say that the law is the work of humans, so it is perfectible. But we must recognize its merits, especially in terms of human rights.

Economic interests should not override the fundamental human rights on top of which the right to life.