

Rebecca Neville

From: Craig Stevens
Sent: Sunday, March 11, 2018 12:46 PM
Subject: Alert: Congolese Opposition Leaders Meeting in Johannesburg to Chart Course for Elections

Good Afternoon -

A large majority of the opposition to the current ruling party in the Democratic Republic of Congo is represented this weekend at a meeting in Johannesburg as they chart a course for presidential elections slated to be held by the end of 2018. The meeting has already run two days and is expected to conclude tomorrow afternoon, Monday, with a press conference.

According to the government, the presidential elections will take place on December 23, 2018, however there is concern that never-before-used voting machines may break down or lead to voting fraud. The U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley has called for the use of paper ballots for this important election. It is also unclear whether President Kabila - whose term Constitutionally expired in Dec. 2016 - will run for re-election; despite its being barred by the nation's Constitution.

Followers of the news coming out of DRC know that the country is going through a serious political and security crisis as Mr. Kabila continues to close the political space in the country; arresting, jailing, or killing members of the Opposition. Peaceful demonstrations have been met by real bullets, as the Army and the police are shooting on civilians.

However, with the gathering in South Africa, there is a sense of hope that for the first time in the DRC's history there will be a peaceful transition of power and for the first time since May 31, 1997, the country will be led by someone with a name other than Kabila.

Governor Katumbi gave remarks to the group that assembled yesterday, and I would expect him to speak to the gathering again tomorrow. One of my colleagues is on site in Johannesburg and sent along a translated version of Gov. Katumbi's remarks.

I have pulled a couple of excerpts here and posted the entire speech below.

For regular updates throughout the proceedings follow Olivier Kamitatu on Twitter @OlivierKamitatu

Please let me know if you have any thoughts or questions.

Thanks,
Craig

Excerpts

What brings us here is, above all, the rejection of the dictatorship that has settled in our beautiful country, and the desire to build a better world for our fellow countrymen. In the past couple of months, recent years, our countrymen have stood up to defend these values. Millions of Congolese marched across all countries

and faced the bullets. Some have lost their lives. They are heroes. They are in our hearts and in our memories. We will never forget them.

...

Let us take inspiration from the courage of our fellow countrymen. During these three days, let us live up to their sacrifice.

If you are here today, it is because you too are not afraid, that you too defend your convictions. These beliefs that we share, together, we will turn them into actions, and make them win. The Congolese people are watching us and want to see a strong opposition.

Personally, I was governor and you know, that when my convictions were no longer in agreement with the imposed political choices, I took my responsibilities. I was not afraid to resign, to mark my opposition because, in all circumstances, we must know how to reconcile morality and politics.

...

Here we are in the final hurdle, before the change that our people demand. The conditions for considering credible, fair and honest elections are far from being fulfilled. Many fellow countrymen still languish in prison unjustly deprived of their liberty. Others are condemned to exile. Peaceful demonstrations are repressed in the blood. Private media close to the opposition is threatened or closed down.

The electoral process is still threatened by the dictatorship. CENI wants to impose a machine to cheat ... The electoral file must be audited and cleaned. The question of the vote of Congolese people abroad has still not been settled. The law on the distribution of seats has not yet been voted.

...

I ask you to work together. Not looking at the future with your eyes looking in the rear-view mirror. There is no G7 here, AR, Dynamics, Civil Society. There are no old and new here. There are patriots here who are determined together to build a new Congo. Let us be disciplined and worthy of the expectations of our people to be at the "Rendez Vous" of December 23 and bring to the Congolese people the change they demand.

Full Text (translated from French)

My dear friends,

We are gathered on the blessed land of Africa to share our views and together, give a new impulse to our dear, great and beautiful country, the Democratic Republic of Congo. I recognise a lot of known faces here, some that I have not seen in years. I am very happy.

Thank you for being here.

Thank you for responding without hesitation to my invitation. From all the provinces of Congo, Africa and beyond, you have travelled thousands of kilometres to join me here in South Africa. Your commitment, your availability touches me deeply. Together we will work for the future of our country.

I also want to thank the South African authorities. Whenever the fate of Congo has been threatened, the Republic of South Africa has responded in support. The Sun City negotiations continue to mark the collective memory. These negotiations have put an end to the war. They sealed our destiny.

Today, because of the arbitrariness and injustice in Congo, I cannot launch my Movement from my home country, your country, our country! And it is again South Africa that offers us its hospitality. In Nelson Mandela's country, democracy is lived day to day. Institutions work. Justice is independent. When the good example comes from elsewhere, let's not be afraid to inspire ourselves from it. This country shows us that Democracy in Africa is not just a dream.

My dear friends,

What brings us here is, above all, the rejection of the dictatorship that has settled in our beautiful country, and the desire to build a better world for our fellow countrymen. In the past couple of months, recent years, our countrymen have stood up to defend these values. Millions of Congolese marched across all countries and faced the bullets. Some have lost their lives. They are heroes. They are in our hearts and in our memories. We will never forget them. In memory of all these heroes, I ask you to observe a minute of silence.

My dear friends,

Let us take inspiration from the courage of our fellow countrymen. During these three days, let us live up to their sacrifice.

If you are here today, it is because you too are not afraid, that you too defend your convictions. These beliefs that we share, together, we will turn them into actions, and make them win. The Congolese people are watching us and want to see a strong opposition.

Personally, I was governor and you know, that when my convictions were no longer in agreement with the imposed political choices, I took my responsibilities. I was not afraid to resign, to mark my opposition because, in all circumstances, we must know how to reconcile morality and politics.

These three days together will help build the change of tomorrow and show the Congolese people that they are not alone, that we work and that we will win.

My dear friends,

Here we are in the final hurdle, before the change that our people demand. The conditions for considering credible, fair and honest elections are far from being fulfilled. Many fellow countrymen still languish in prison unjustly deprived of their liberty. Others are condemned to exile. Peaceful demonstrations are repressed in the blood. Private media close to the opposition is threatened or closed down.

The electoral process is still threatened by the dictatorship. CENI wants to impose a machine to cheat ... The electoral file must be audited and cleaned. The question of the vote of Congolese people abroad has still not been settled. The law on the distribution of seats has not yet been voted. All these points, lead us to commit ourselves. If we want elections to take place in time, we must prepare. This is the reason for our meeting here in South Africa.

My dear friends,

I am addressing you today as the captain of the team that wants to win. Our victory is first and foremost about the seriousness, application and the work that we have to do together. Leave no room for improvisation. Let's work hard. Our country deserves it. It's urgent.

As of today, I ask you to work together. Not looking at the future with your eyes looking in the rear-view mirror. There is no G7 here, AR, Dynamics, Civil Society. There are no old and new here. There are patriots here who are determined together to build a new Congo. Let us be disciplined and worthy of the expectations of our people to be at the "Rendez Vous" of December 23 and bring to the Congolese people the change they demand.

I wish you fruitful exchanges and thank you again.

NOTE: *These materials are distributed by DCI Group AZ, L.L.C. for Akin Gump Straus Hauer and Feld LLP on behalf of Moise Katumbi, and additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, DC.*