

A Political Opinion Poll

An Update On A Contentious Political Process



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"To describe human realities, to try to understand them, may in fact be a way to help, those who hold power, as well as those who have entrusted them to it to better apprehend these realities; it is also a way to give its full dimension to politics, without stepping out of bounds ».

”

Alfred Grosser,
Historian, Political Scientist and Journalist
Honorary Professor of Sciences PO,
Paris (France)

The Congo Research Group (CRG) is an independent, non-profit research project dedicated to understanding the violence that affects millions of Congolese. We carry out rigorous research on different aspects of the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. All of our research is informed by deep historical and social knowledge of the problem at hand. We are based at the Center on International Cooperation at New York University..

All of our publications, blogs and podcasts are available at: www.congoresearchgroup.org and www.gecongo.org

Created in 1990, the “Bureau d’Études, de Recherches, et de Consulting International”, (BERCI) is a limited liability company dedicated to undertakes research and evaluation projects to improve evidence-based decision-making in DRC. The first Congolese public opinion research firm, BERCI’s activities focuses on development, good governance, statebuilding and peacebuilding related research. Our non-profit polls are jointly coordinated with Fondation BERCI, ASBL.

Images Credentials - Cover page: A woman walking in front of the Electoral Commission (CENI) main office in Kinshasa (DRC) November 5, 2017 by JOHN WESSELS / AFP; p.7 : Article 15. Cheri Benga, 2015; p.8. Corneille Nangaa ; Photo@CENI_RDC; p.10. Nikki Haley with Félix Tshisekedi, Pierre Lumbi, Eve Bazaiba and Vital Kamerhe@ mediacongo.net ; p.11. Kabila in Goma by Kinkaya bin Karubi upload @ <http://kikayabinkarubi.netg>; p.12. UN Secrity Council @Reuters/Brenden Mc Dermid ; p.20; BERCI Enumrators at BERCI main office in Kinshasa @Berci.

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Methodology

Executive Summary

The Bureau d'Études, de Recherches, et de Consulting International (BERCI) and the Congo Research Group (CRG) at New York University conducted a series of nationally representative political opinion polls across the Democratic Republic of the Congo in February 2017, August 2017, November 2017, and January/February 2018.

The polls were taken to better understand the attitude of the Congolese public toward the political turmoil that has enveloped the country as it heads toward elections. The results show an electorate deeply skeptical of the election commission, which 69 percent do not trust to organize fair elections, and toward President Kabila, of whom 80 percent of respondents have a negative opinion. A full 74 percent support the demand of some civil society and opposition parties that Kabila step down before elections are held.

Nonetheless, the Congolese public remains strongly attached to the democratic process, with 95 percent saying they plan on voting in elections, currently scheduled for December 23, 2018. Seventy-seven percent also support the current protests, led by Catholic lay groups that demand the full implementation of the December 31, 2016 agreement signed between the opposition and the government.

If elections do take place and provided that they are free and fair, the poll suggests that they will be the opposition's to lose. Only 17 percent say they would vote for a presidential candidate in the ruling coalition, although the opposition vote would be very fragmented, with the most popular figure, Moise Katumbi, getting 24 percent of the vote. A slight majority of parliamentary seats would be controlled by a broad coalition of opposition parties, although alliances could easily change.

Popular opinion remains favorable to outside intervention to help broker a political solution to the current impasse. An overwhelming majority (68 percent) welcomes sanctions imposed by the European Union

and the United States against government officials, and 77 percent would approve of an international steering committee to accompany the electoral process. Despite the government's strong criticism of Belgium, the country's popularity has risen considerably, with 82% of the respondents saying it is a positive influence in the Congo.



DRC Government's headquarters in Kinshasa, quartier de la Gombe, February 2016 © JUNIOR KANNAH/AFP

The polls consisted of telephone interviews of 1024 persons of 18 years of age and above in February 2017, of 1277 respondents in April 2017, of 1,129 persons in August 2017 and of 1101 respondents in November 2017 in all the 26 provinces of the country. It also contains data from 1118 respondents in January/February 2018 in 25 out of the 26 province of DRC, the exception being Tshuapa province. The interviews took place from February 19 to 28, 2017, from August 6 to 11, 2017, from November 9 to 16, 2017, and from January 30 to February 10, 2018. The margin of error for all the polls was +/-3 percent.

Introduction

Building democratic institutions and administrative capacity is key to peacebuilding. Conflict can no longer be simply reduced to the absence of effective state institutions. It is now essential to better understand the consequences of persisting local context and social conditions, for intervening effectively in fragile states. The “local turn” in peacebuilding emphasizes the often-neglected role of local political and societal actors.¹

The Bureau d'Études, de Recherches, et de Consulting International (BERCI) and the Congo Research Group (CRG) at New York University conducted a series of nationally representative political opinion polls across the Democratic Republic of the Congo in August 2017, November 2017, and February 2018. Our goal has been to allow Congolese of all ages and social background to voice their views in a political conversation that has been dominated by Congolese elites and foreign pundits.

The Political Crisis

The current political turmoil makes this exercise all the more relevant today. The country was supposed to hold historic elections in December 2016, which should have led to the first democratic transfer of executive power in the country's history. Bound by constitutional term limits, President Joseph Kabila was required to step down, thereby consolidating the institutions set up during the Congolese peace process. Elections, however, were delayed for logistical, financial, and political reasons. While the constitutional court decided that President Kabila could stay in power until a new president is elected, the opposition and most of popular opinion disagreed.²

Under the terms of that deal, a joint government was supposed to be formed to lead to country to elections by the end of 2017. Another institution, the *Conseil national de suivi de l'accord* (National Council for Oversight of the Deal, CNSA) was created to oversee the implementation of the deal. Both the government and the CNSA were supposed to be led by a member of the opposition.

A Chaotic Implementation Of The New Year's Eve Deal

On April 7, 2017, however, President Kabila named Bruno Tshibala, a dissident member of the UDPS opposition party, as prime minister. The UDPS and many other opposition parties rejected Tshibala's nomination, although some smaller parties participated in the government he formed on May 9, 2017. There was a similar reaction when Joseph Olenghankoy, the leader of a small opposition party, was named as president of the CNSA on July 22, 2017.

The remaining opposition, largely represented by the *Rassemblement des forces politiques et sociales acquises au changement*, is now calling for Kabila's resignation, arguing that he cannot be trusted to hold elections. Civil society and youth groups, mostly grouped together in a coalition called *Collectif d'Actions de la Société Civile* (CASC), has issued a similar call. Both groups have tried to organize street protests, but this has been almost impossible since September 2016—when large demonstrations roiled the country—due to heavy handed repression by security forces. On November 5, 2017 the *Commission Électorale Nationale Indépendante* (CENI) finally published, a week after the visit of US Ambassador Nikki Haley, its electoral calendar, which schedules presidential and legislative elections for December 23, 2018. Since then, the momentum toward elections has accelerated.

On December 16, 2017, the Parliament adopted a new electoral law that was quickly promulgated by Joseph Kabila on December 24, 2017. The law was criticized for favoring the ruling party by civil society, the opposition and even by some members of the presidential majority. Political parties and coalitions must now win one percent of votes in national legislative elections in order to be eligible for a seat in parliament. It also increases the deposit to be paid in order to be able to contest the election.

1. Malte Brosig & Norman Sempijja (2018) Human development and security sector reform: The examples of Liberia and the Democratic Republic of Congo, *African Security*, 11:1, 59-83, DOI: 10.1080/19392206.2017.1419622.

2. In mid-2016, we asked 7,500 people the following question: “If national elections are not held before the end of the year, should the President step down or can he stay until the elections are held?” Seventy-four percent said Kabila should leave at the end of 2016.

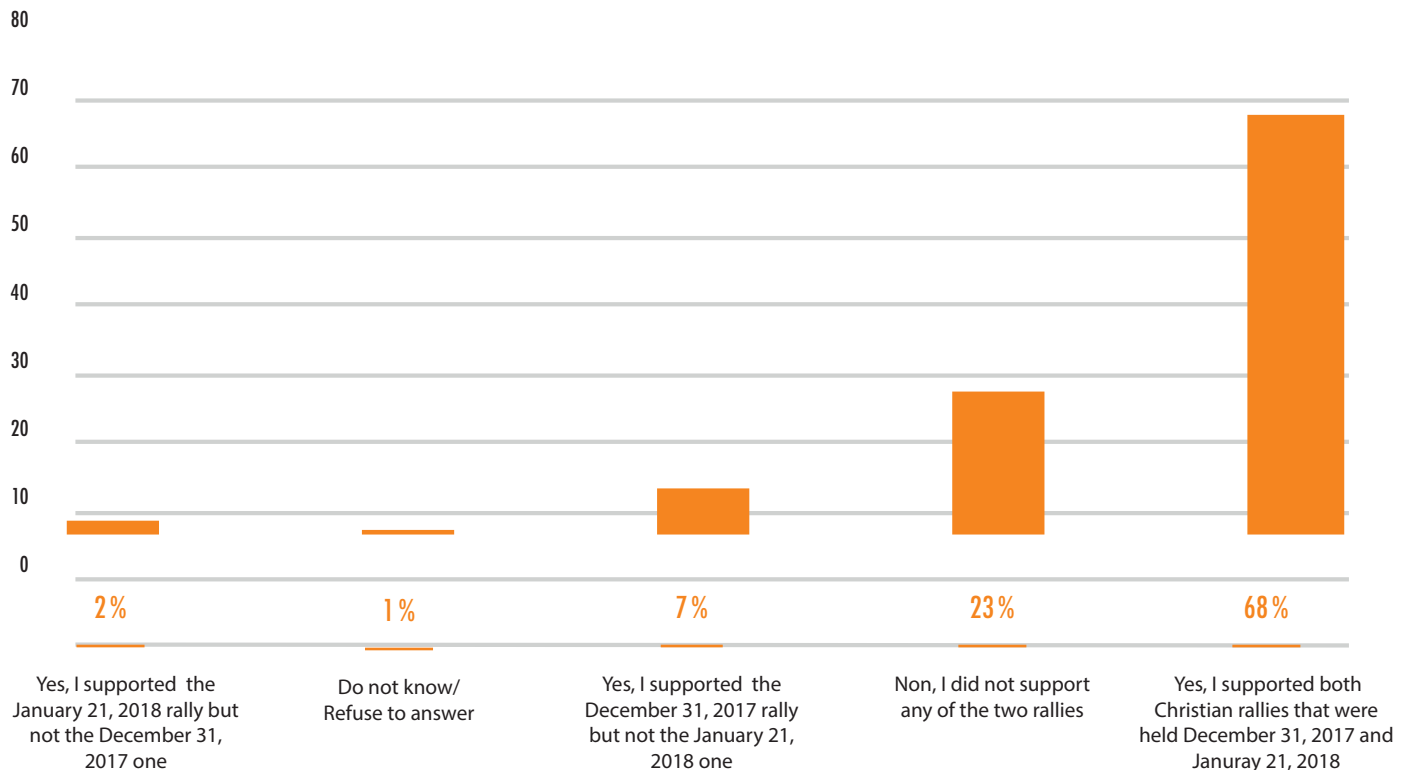
Our February 2018 poll indicates that a large majority of respondents (64 percent) endorses a complaint lodged against the law with the Constitutional Court by a dissident non-partisan parliamentarian group. Many continue to be critical of heading to elections in these conditions. Last November, the Catholic Church, and the *Comité Laïc de Coordination* (CLC), a lay Catholic group, called for peaceful protests to mark the anniversary of the December 31, 2016 compromise, saying the terms of the deal had not yet been met.

Two unauthorized rallies were held on December 31, 2017 and January 21 2018, during which at least thirteen people were killed, despite appeals from the United Nations and others to respect people's right to protest.³ According to the United Nations Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUSCO), several priests were beaten and detained, 57 people were injured and 111 were arrested nationwide.⁴

The CRG/BERCi January/February 2018 poll shows that 77 percent of respondents supported the December 31, 2017 and the January 21, 2018 protests, while 73 percent of respondents thought the involvement and support of other religious groups strengthened the movement.

President Joseph Kabila Breaks His Silence

For the first time in six years,⁵ on January 26, 2018, the day marking his 17th anniversary as president, Joseph Kabila held a press conference to present his assessment of the political situation and what he considered to be his legacy. The press conference was widely covered, and only 19 percent of respondents of our February 2018 poll agreed with President Kabila's evaluation of the current situation.⁶



3. MONUSCO and <http://www.scmp.com/news/world/africa/article/2126346/eight-killed-church-altar-boys-detained-dr-congo-forces-launch>.

4. Florence Marshal, MONUSCO, as cited by <http://www.kinshasatimes.cd/rdc-une-guerre-de-chiffres-autour-du-bilan-de-la-marche-du-21-janvier/>

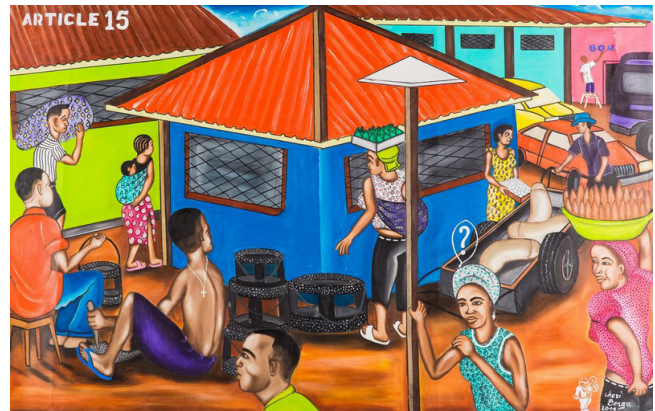
5. Kabila last press conference was in July 2012.

6. We asked the following question in our January/February poll: What is your appreciation of President Kabila's public discourse during his January 2, 2018 press conference?

A Deeply Skeptical Electorate

Given this backdrop, it is not surprising that much of the population is downbeat about the Congo's future. In February 2018 poll, 82 percent of the respondents thought that the country is headed in the wrong direction, compared with 72 percent in November 2017, and roughly the same number as in our February 2017 poll. Furthermore, the majority of the respondents (55 percent) felt in November 2018 that there was an increased chance for civil conflicts in coming months.

However, this appears to be an indictment of the country's leadership rather than despair over the country's fate. Indeed, when asked about their future over the next five years, 82 percent of respondents felt "very optimistic", and 64 percent of respondents felt the same way about the country. This suggests that Congolese believe that they have the power to bring about change, a departure from the Congo-pessimism prevalent among many commentators. When asked who determines Congo's destiny in February 2018 poll: 46 percent said "Congolese themselves"; 31 percent,



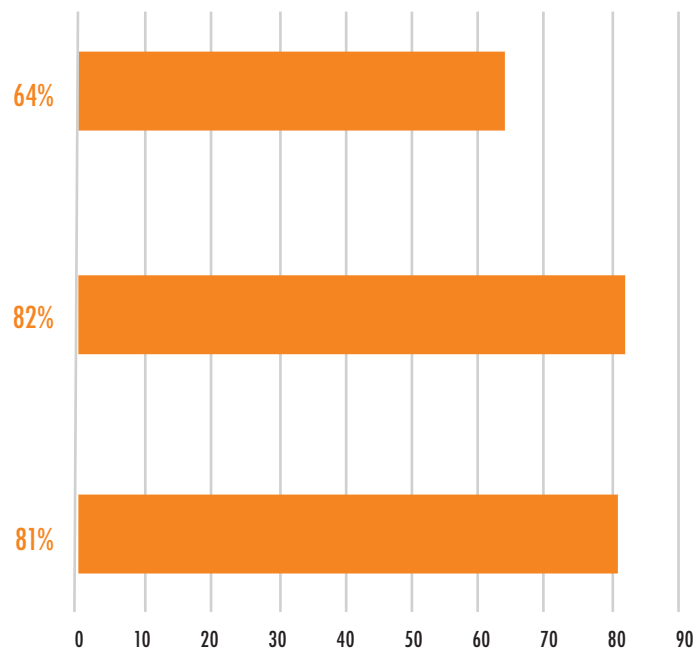
Article 15 @ Cheri Benga, 2015

the international community"; and 8 percent, "neighboring or regional countries"; or "God" (13 percent). This optimism may be rooted in an "Article 15" state of mind—a Congolese expression referring to an imaginary article of the constitution according to which everyone should fend for oneself and not expect anything from the state.

Regarding the future of the country in the next five years, do you feel very optimistic, rather optimistic, rather pessimistic or not at all pessimistic? (% very/rather optimistic)

Regarding your own future in the next five years, do you feel very optimistic, rather optimistic, rather pessimistic or not at all pessimistic? (% very/rather optimistic)

Do you think that the country is heading in the right direction or in the wrong direction? (% wrong direction only)



Elections

The gloomy attitude about the country is likely rooted in the current political impasse. A dramatic 69 percent of the population does not trust the electoral commission in February 2018 – a 26 percentage points drop in confidence compared to mid-2016. Seventy-two percent of the population, also, has a negative opinion of Corneille Nangaa, the president of the CENI in February 2018, compared with 57 percent last November.



Sixty percent of those polled said, in November 2017, they did not support the recently published electoral calendar, which extended President Kabila's mandate for another year.

Democratic Process Support

Nonetheless, as suggested in past polls, the population's dedication to the democratic process and the constitution remains strong. In February 2018, a full 97 percent of those asked said that they had registered to vote, which tracks with figures provided by the CENI, while 95 percent of the respondents declare their intention to vote in the upcoming elections, same proportion of respondents as last November. Meanwhile, the proportion of the population that thinks that elections will take place as planned has increased from 32 percent in August 2017 to 59 percent in February 2018.

Do you intend to vote in the presidential and/or the legislative elections ?
(% yes only)



With the current country situation, do you think that the presidential and legislative elections will take place as scheduled?
(% yes only)



Have you participated in the voter registration process in your province ?
(% yes only)



Do you trust CENI to organize free, fair and transparent elections ?
(% no only)



Do you have a good or bad opinion of Corneille Nangaa ?
(% bad opinion)



The Way Forward

Deep divisions have emerged over the way forward out of the current political predicament. Much of the opposition, civil society, and youth movements have demanded for Kabila to resign at the end of 2017, while major donors, the United Nations, and the African Union have all endorsed CENI's calendar. The United States has gone so far to say that it opposes any "unconstitutional transfer of power," ostensibly referring to the opposition's call for a transitional government.⁷

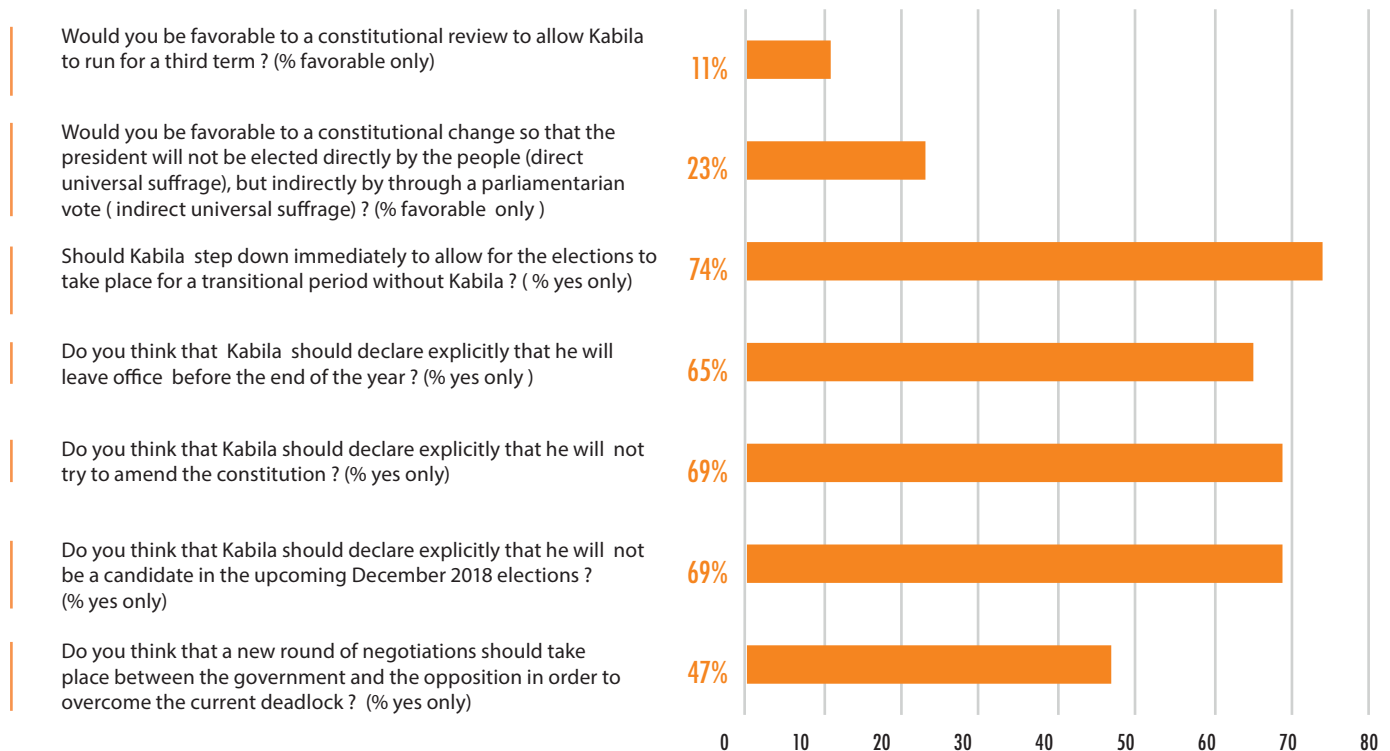
Pro-opposition Public Opinion

Congolese popular opinion appears to side more with the Opposition and civil society. In our latest poll, even fewer are in favor of a constitutional referendum that would allow Kabila to obtain another term in office than a year ago: a mere 11 percent, compared with 16 percent in mid-2016, and 7

percent in November 2017. Fifty-nine percent supported a transition without Kabila as president in November 2017, and that percentage increased to 74 percent in January 2018.

According the January/February poll, the idea of renewed negotiations between the opposition and the ruling parti gaining ground: 47 percent of respondents support that option, as opposed to 28 percent last November. Nonetheless, a large majority thinks that Kabila should declare explicitly that he will not be candidate in the upcoming elections of 2018 (65 percent) and that he should not change the constitution (69 percent).

Finally, in response to proposals floated by some in the presidential majority, only 23 percent of the population would approve a change to the constitution to allow the president to be elected indirectly by the parliament—a change that could open the door for a third term for Kabila.



7. Donald Y. Yamamoto , Acting Assistant Secretary, Bureau of African Affairs' Statement Before The House Foreign Affairs Committee Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations Washington, DC, November 9, 2017 - US Department of State in <https://www.state.gov/p/af/rls/rm/2017/275449.htm>.

Deep Opposition To The Government



The favorability ratings show an electorate clearly favorable to the opposition and critical of the ruling coalition. In February 2018, 80 percent had a bad opinion of President Kabila--an eight-percentage point increase as compared to a year ago and his highest disapproval rating since he came to power in 2001. A retrospective of BERC political polls indicates that once a Congolese president's disapproval curve crosses the approval one, the observed downward trend is irreversible.⁸

The same trend can be observed regarding the government and the CNSA. A large majority of respondents had an unfavorable opinion of :

- Bruno Tshibala, the Prime Minister (60 percent in August 2017, 61 percent in November 2017, and 70 percent in February 2018); and
- Joseph Olenghankoy, the head of the committee in charge of implementing the New Year's Eve agreement (65 percent in August 2017, 57 percent in November 2017, and 70 percent in January 2018).

The reverse tendency can be, however, observed with the opposition, despite their struggle to mobilize the population. Around 70 percent of those polled had a favorable opinion of the political opposition in general with:

- 78 percent expressing positive views of opposition leader Moise Katumbi, an eight percent increase compared to mid-2016 ;
- 66 percent had a positive view of Felix Tshisekedi, - an eleven percent increase compared to February 2017; and
- 72 percent had a positive view of Eve Bazaiba in February 2018, a 40 percent increase compared to mid-2016.

We found a similar level of approval, around 70 percent, for the main youth movements, LUCHA and Filimbi (the newer groups, such as Telema Ekoki and Les congolais debout, scored slightly lower), in November 2017.

Regarding other opposition leaders: the upward tendency is confirmed:

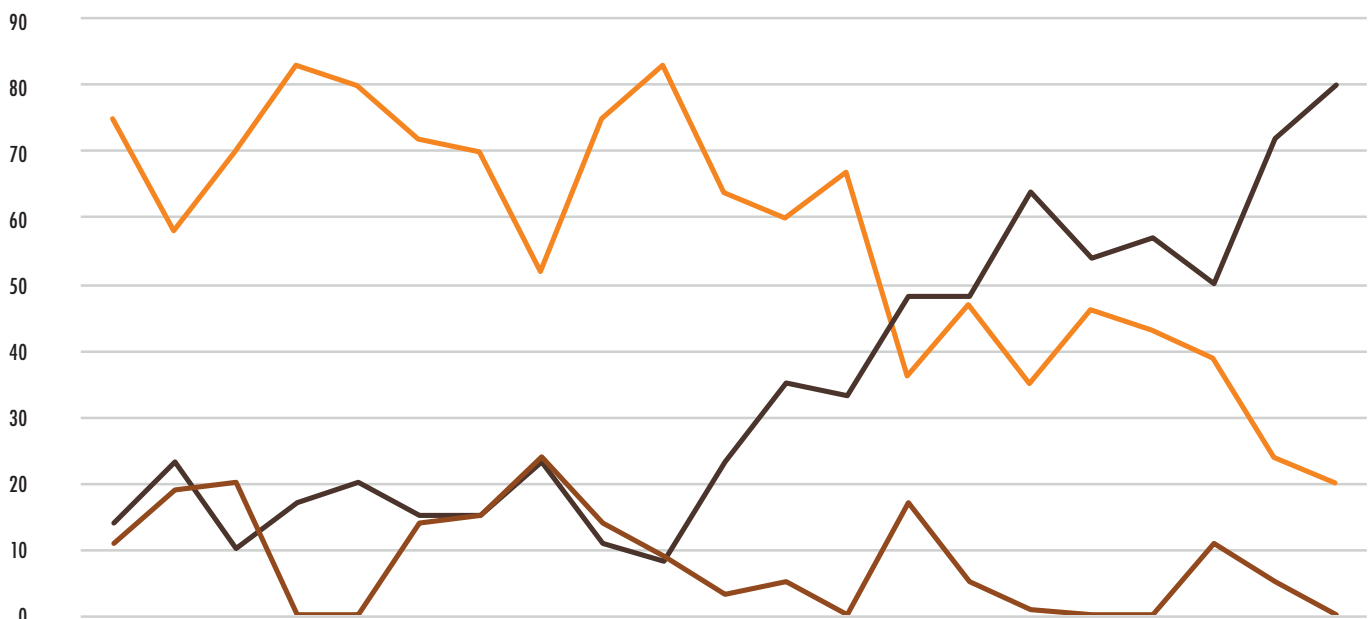
- Vital Kamerhe's approval rating increased from 46 percent in mid-May 2016 to 56 percent in February 2018; as well as,
- Martin Fayulu rose from 30 percent in mid-May 2016 to 57 percent in February 2018 of *good opinions*;
- Sindika Dokolo rose from 35 percent in August 2017 to 50 percent in February 2018.⁹

8. Cf. President Mobutu and President Laurent Désiré Kabila approval rating in BERC's polls from 1992 to 2000.

9. The son-in-law of the former President of Angola Dos Santos, and President of "Les Congolais Debout".

?

DO YOU HAVE A GOOD OPINION, BAD OPINION, OR NO OPINION AT ALL OF PRESIDENT JOSEPH KABILA?¹⁰



	Sept. 2001	Oct. 2001	March 2001	July 2001	Nov. 2001	Jan. 2002	April 2002	Feb. 2002	July 2003*	Oct. 2003**	Oct. 2007*	April 2009	June 2010	Sept. 2011	Sept. 2014	Jan. 2015	March 2015	Feb. 2016	May 2016*	Feb. 2017*	Feb. 2018
Good opinion	75%	58%	70%	83%	80%	72%	70%	52%	75%	83%	64%	60%	67%	36%	47%	35%	46%	43%	39%	24%	20%
Bad opinion	14%	23%	10%	17%	20%	15%	15%	23%	11%	8%	23%	35%	33%	48%	48%	64%	54%	57%	50%	72%	80%
No opinion at all	11%	19%	20%	0%	0%	14%	15%	24%	14%	9%	3%	5%	0%	17%	5%	1%	0%	0%	11%	5%	0%

10. (*) Nationwide Surveys; (**) Surveys conducted in the capital cities of the eleven provinces, all the other polls were conducted in Kinshasa. In May 2016 the question was addressed the following way : Soutenez-vous fortement, moyennement, ou pas du tout, la manière dont le Président Kabila gère son travail en tant que Président de la République? – “Fortement” and “moyennement” are considered “good opinion” and “pas du tout” is considered “bad opinion”.

How Would The Elections Play Out ?

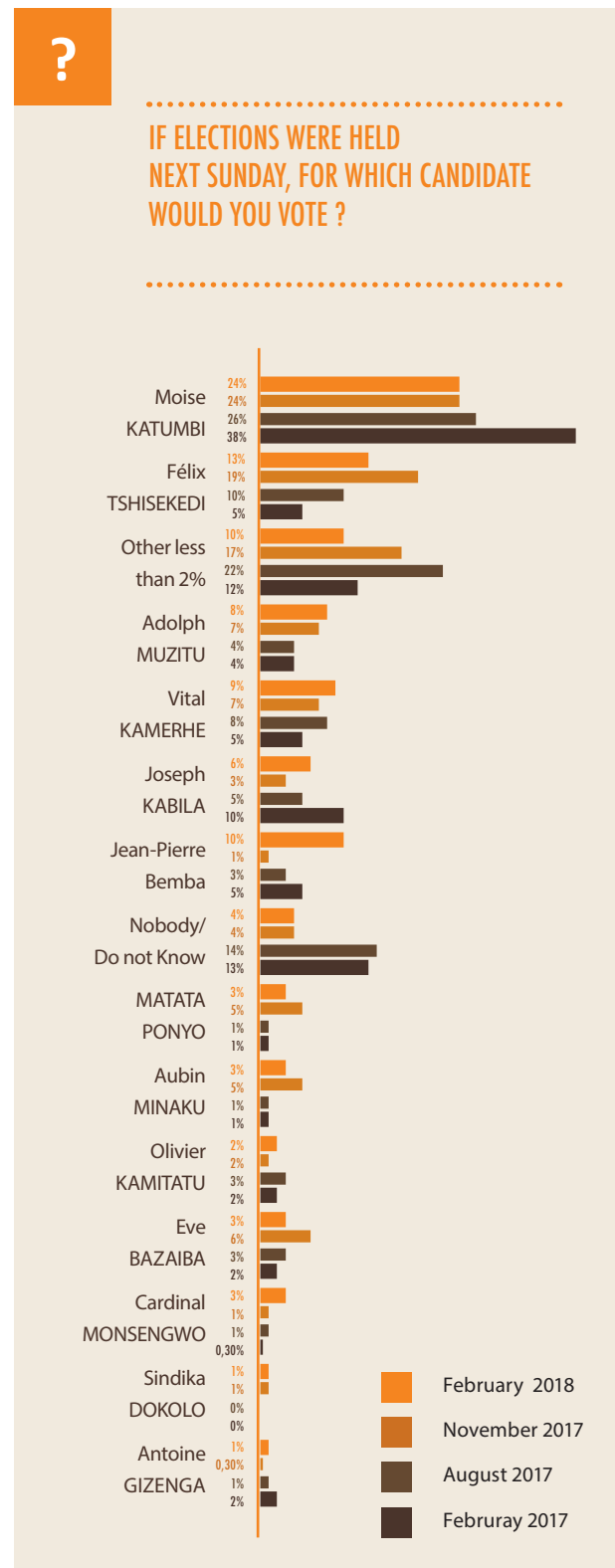
Polling this far ahead of elections is not a reliable indicator of the outcome of the future vote. However, it can be instructive regarding political dynamics in general. Considering that, as stated above, 95 percent of the population intends to vote in the upcoming presidential elections, the analysis below only includes this group of respondents.

Fragmented Hypothetical Votes

Our poll results indicate that broad popular support for the opposition does not necessarily translate into a victory at the ballot box. The parliament changed the constitution in 2011 to get rid of a run-off round in the presidential election, which would have allowed opposition candidates to form a coalition against the incumbent. This allows Kabila to play on the divisions among his opponents; his successor could potentially win with a small fraction of the vote.

At the moment, for example, the opposition vote would be divided among four main candidates—Moise Katumbi (G7) with 24 percent, Felix Tshisekedi (UDPS) with 13 percent, Vital Kamerhe (UNC) with 8 percent, and Jean-Pierre Bemba (MLC) with 10 percent. Together with other opposition candidates, they would get 66 percent of the votes.¹¹

In contrast, only 6 percent would vote for Kabila, and a total of 17 percent would vote for someone currently in the ruling coalition¹² - a number that has remained relatively stable over the past year.¹³

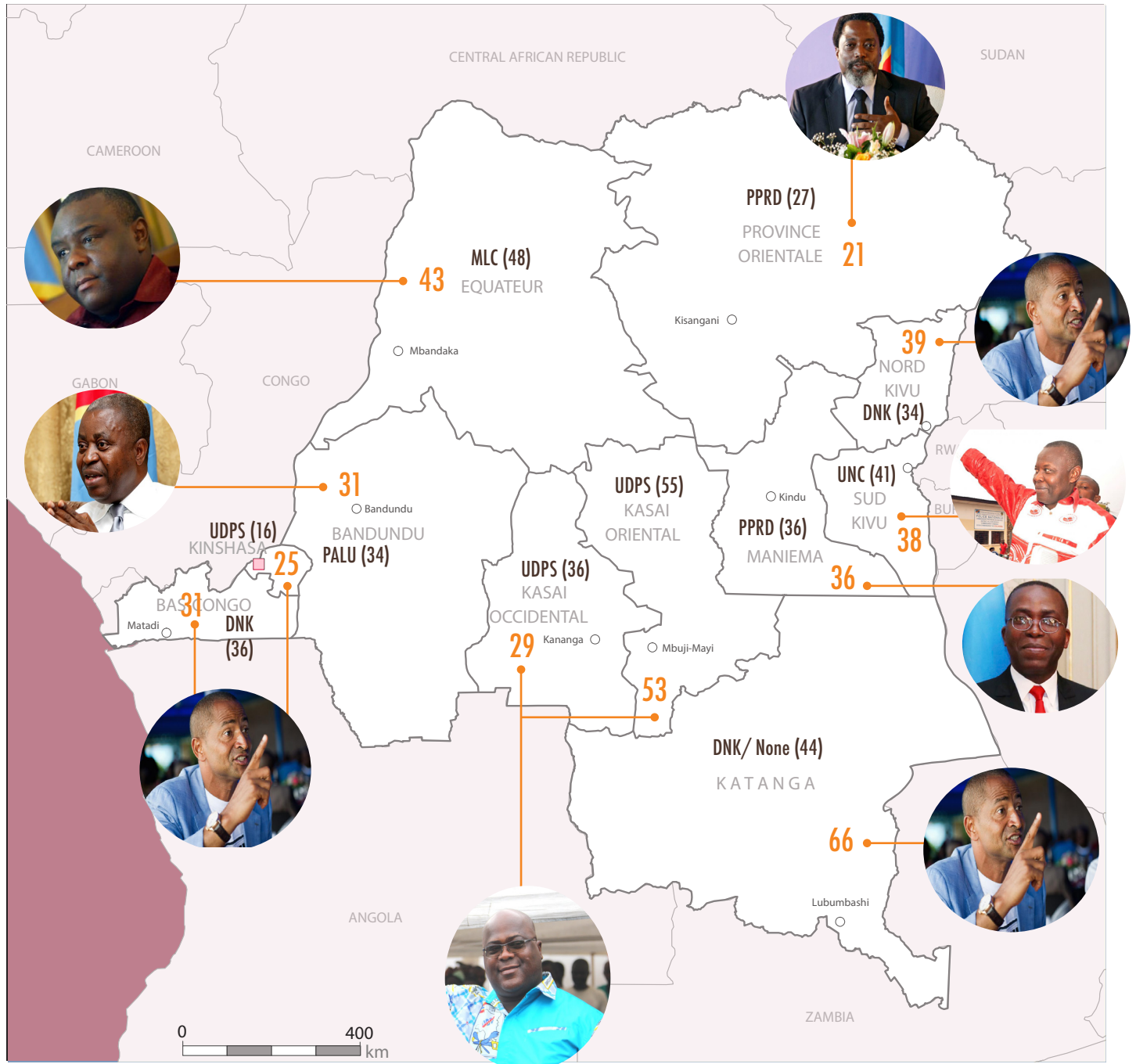


11. This includes Moise Katumbi, Felix Tshisekedi, Vital Kamerhe, Jean-Pierre Bemba, Eve Bazaiba, Cardinal Laurent Monsengwo, Olivier Kamitatu, Sindika Dokolo and Martin Fayulu

12. This includes Aubin Minaku, Azarias Ruberwa, Augustin Matata Ponyo, Adolphe Muzito, Lambert Mende, And Antoine Gizenga.

13. In our poll between May and September 2016, 17,5 percent said they would vote for someone in the ruling coalition.

FIGURE 1 | PREFERRED CANDIDATE AND POLITICAL PARTY VOTES BY 11 PROVINCES (%) ¹⁴



14. DNK : Includes "Do Not Know", "None" and "Independent" - Score of Presidential candidates and political parties with the highest votes in the province are expressed in %.

While it is possible that the electorate will strategically rally around one opposition candidate, it is clear that a central challenge for the opposition, if elections do happen in 2018, will be to overcome internal differences and egos.

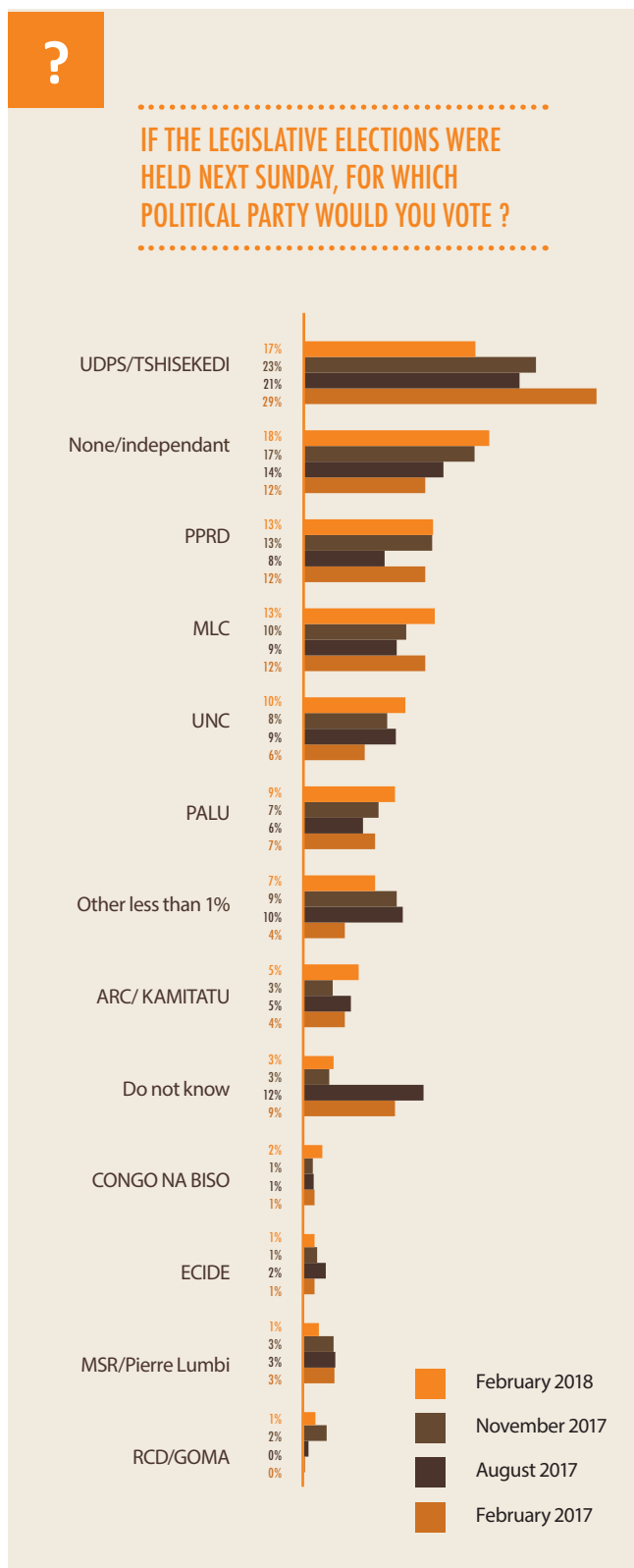
An opposition alliance could also render the elections more credible. A 20 percent difference between candidates would amount to around 6 million votes, if turnout is similar as it has been in the past, a gap that would be difficult to bridge except with the most blatant rigging. Perhaps the key figure regarding that alliance will be Moise Katumbi: if he cannot return to participate in elections, he could become the kingmaker by endorsing another candidate.

There have also been interesting developments with regards to the popularity of individual potential candidates :

- Moise Katumbi, the former governor of Katanga who has been in exile since May 2016, has seen his share of a hypothetical vote decline from 38 percent in February 2017 to 24 percent in our most recent poll, a 14 percent drop over a year. Katumbi's absence from the country is a possible explanation for this drop in popularity.
- Meanwhile, Felix Tshisekedi has seen a surge in his own popularity, most likely due to Katumbi's absence and the death of his father, the former head of the UDPS opposition party. It has climbed from 5 percent in February 2017, just before his father's death, to 13 percent in February 2018, an 8 percent point increase

In Kabila's camp, at the same time, the number of people who say they would vote for the incumbent has fluctuated, while potential successors have emerged:

- Kabila, for whom 8 percent would have voted in mid-2016, got 3 percent in November 2017, and would have obtained 6 percent of the vote in February;
- Both the former Prime Minister Matata Ponyo and President of the National Assembly Aubin Minaku would have gotten around 3 percent of the vote in February 2018, making them the two other most popular members of the current ruling coalition.



Meanwhile, the aging patriarch of the PALU party, Antoine Gizenga, has seen his popularity supplanted by Adolphe Muzito, who garnered 6 percent of a hypothetical vote in November 2017 and 9 percent in February 2018.

Pro-Opposition Parliament

A similar political dynamic would play out in legislative elections. If elections were held in February 2018, the opposition would win most seats in the national assembly with 48 percent,¹⁵ just short of an absolute majority. The current ruling majority, on the other hand, would corner only 26 percent of seats of the upcoming parliament.¹⁶ It should be noted, however, that this analysis is based on national polling—seats are won in multi-seat electoral districts, which our poll does not take into account.

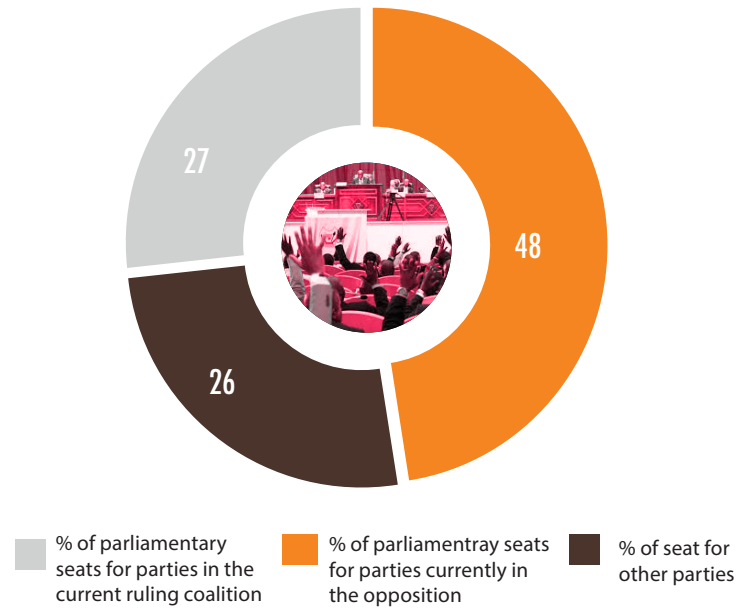
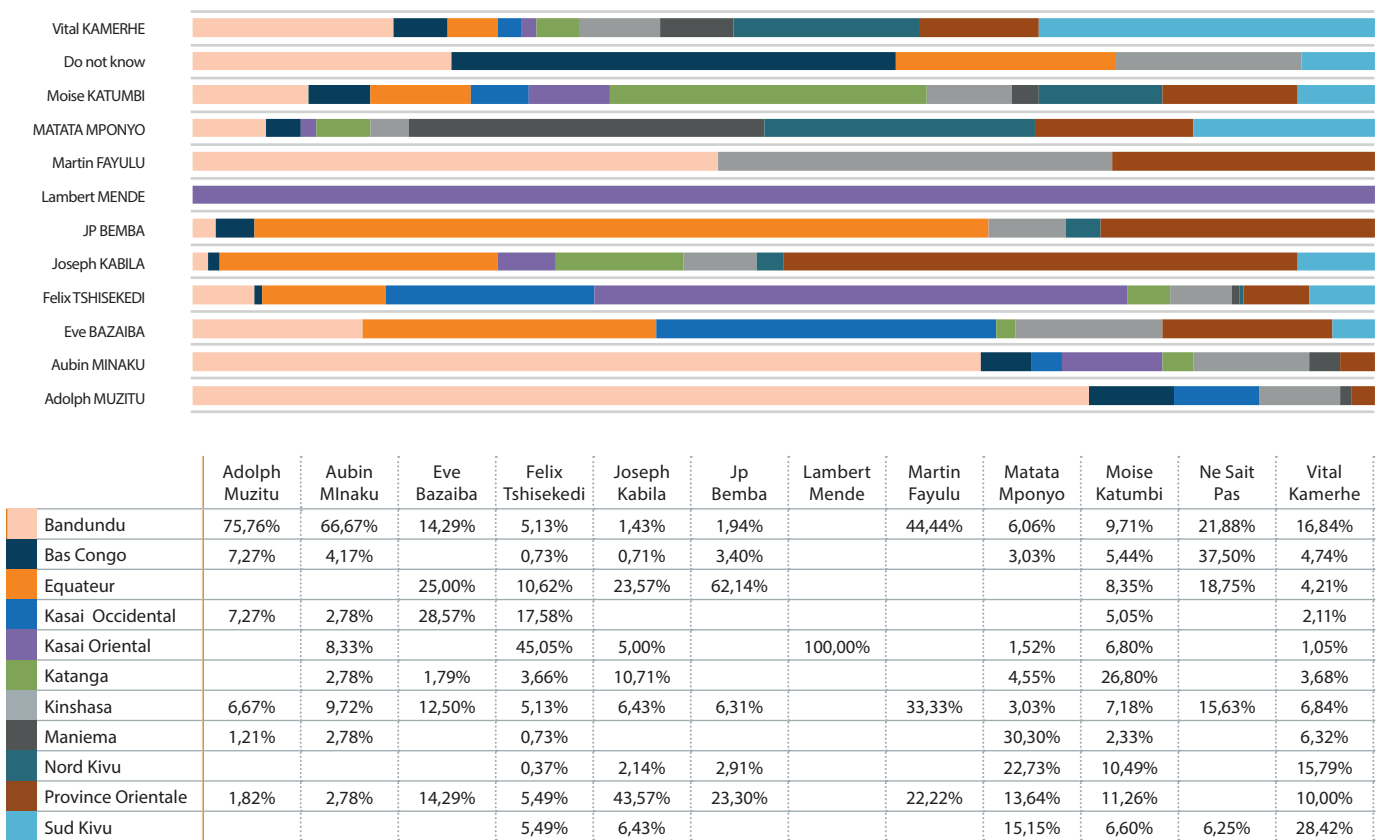


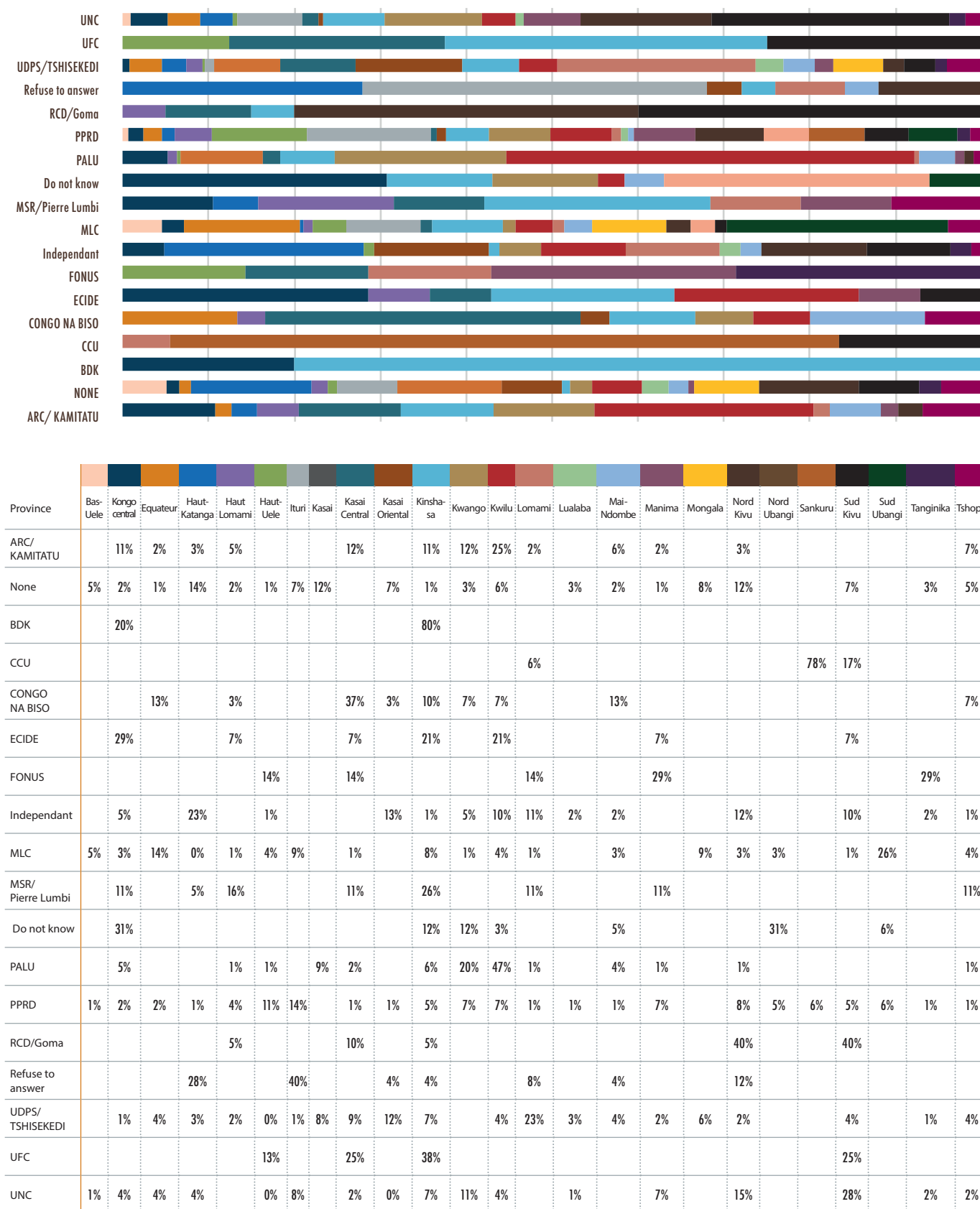
FIGURE 2 | MAIN PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES HYPOTHETICAL VOTES BY 11 PROVINCES



15. This includes : UDPS(17%), MCL (13%), UNC (9%), ARC/Kamitatu (5%), MSR/Pierre Lumbi (1%), Ecide (1%), Congo na Biso (1%), BDK (0,46%)

16. This includes : PPRD (13%), Palu (9%), RCD/Goma (1%), AFDC (1%), UFC (0,4%), MLC/L (0,3%), CCU (1%), and Arc/Minembwe (0.37%)

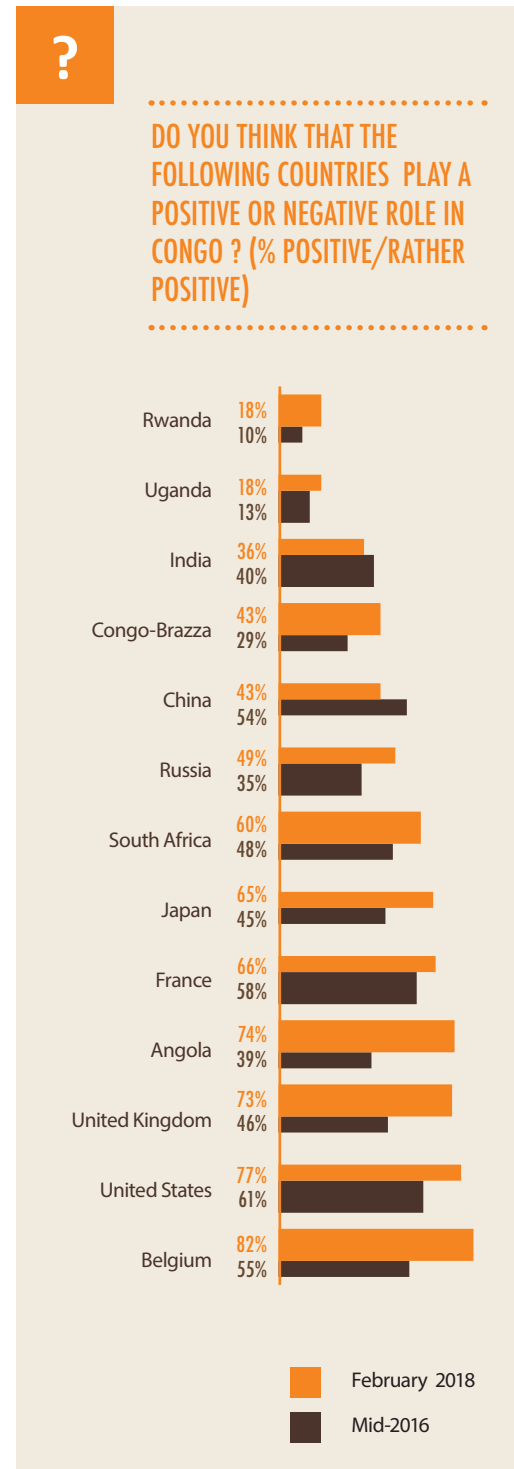
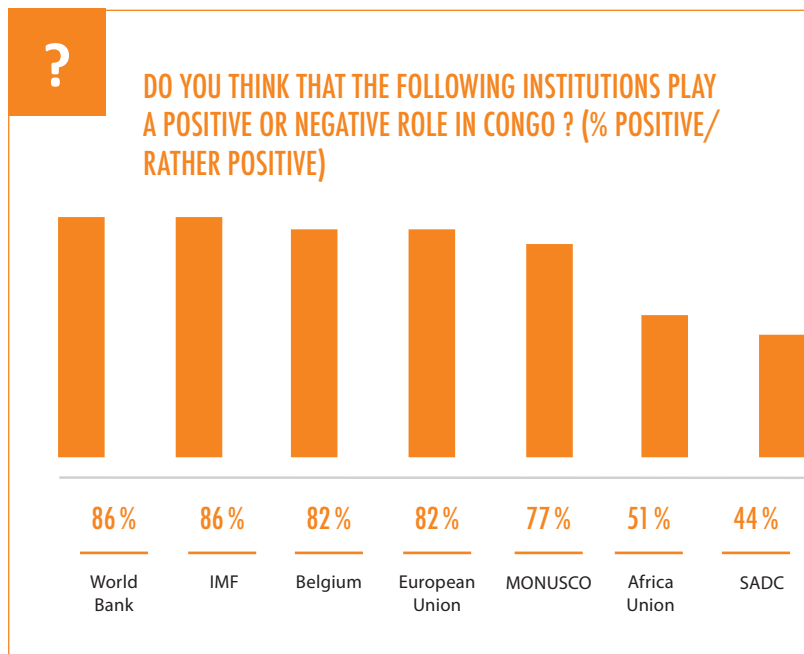
FIGURE 3 | MAIN POLITICAL PARTIES HYPOTHETICAL VOTES BY PROVINCES



Foreign Involvement

Congolese public opinion, which in the past has been very skeptical of western involvement, appears to approve of foreign intervention to solve the current turmoil. When asked about the sanctions imposed against Congolese politicians and security officials, 68 percent approved of them in our November 2017 poll. And an overwhelming majority—88 percent of respondents—in November's poll approved of an international investigation into the violence in the Kasai region, where 1.4 million of people have been internally displaced since August 2016.¹⁷ This is in sharp contrast with views expressed by the ruling coalition, which has portrayed such actions as illegitimate meddling in domestic affairs.¹⁸ Similarly, about 81 percent of respondents

approves of the conditions put forward by the European Union to finance the upcoming elections. Respondents go even further: 77 percent would support the creation of an international steering committee in support of elections, much like the *Comité international d'accompagnement de la transition* (CIAT) at the time of democratic transition between 2003 and 2006, a body often mentioned as an example of excessive foreign meddling by the ruling coalition. Concretely, we asked whether they would support a committee composed of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, South Africa, Angola, Congo-Brazzaville, the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the International Conference on the Great Lakes



17. An investigation by the UN High Commission for Human Rights is currently underway.

18. ICG, December 2017: INTERVIEW / AFRICA 1 DECEMBER 2017, DR Congo's Deadlocked Crises, Originally published in Tagesschau, in an interview with ARD Africa Correspondent Alexander Göbel, Crisis Group's Central Africa Project Director Richard Moncrieff discusses DR Congo's many crises and how the international community can deal with the country's ongoing crisis.

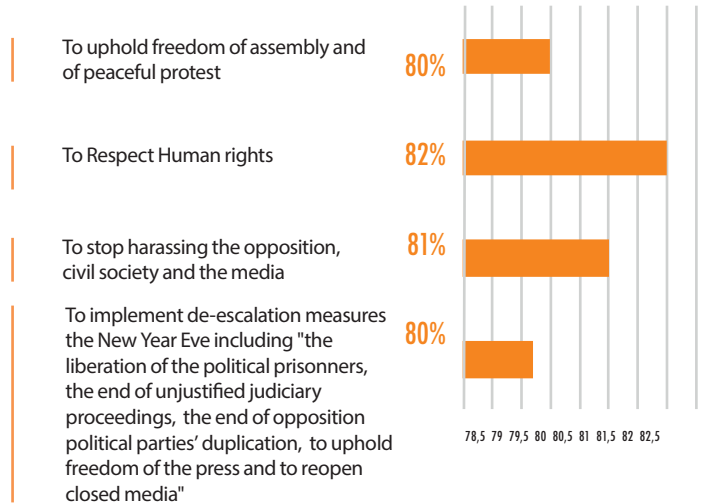
Region (ICGLR), India,¹⁹ Belgium, Canada, the African Union, the European Union and MONUSCO. Respondents were told this committee could coordinate international support to the electoral process and monitor the implementation of the electoral calendar.

We also asked about tensions between the Congolese and Belgian governments. Shortly after the violent repression of the December 31, 2017 and January 21, 2018 protests, the Belgian government decided to suspend all humanitarian financial support to its Congolese counterpart. This decision, together with Belgian criticisms of the repression, prompted the Congolese government to ask Belgium to close its development agency in the country and the EU visa processing Center called “Maison Schengen” that Belgium managed.

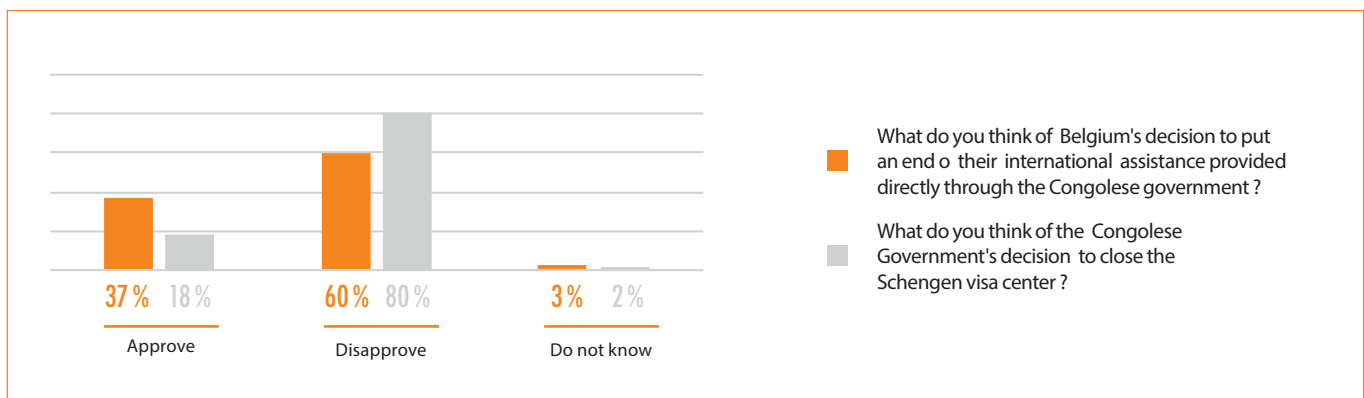
An overwhelming majority of respondents (80 percent) disapproved of the government decision to close the EU visa Center. However, a large majority (60 percent) also disapproved of the Belgian decision to bypass the Congolese government and to redirect humanitarian funding to civil society organizations. Nonetheless, the European Union and the Belgian Cooperation are highly appreciated by the general population with 82 percent of the population thinking that both institutions played a positive role in DRC; only the World Bank and the IMF scored higher with 86 percent each.¹⁹ Furthermore, despite—or perhaps because of—the government’s virulent criticisms of Belgium, the country remained the most popular international partners among the general population, with 82% of respondents recognizing its positive influence in DRC, a rise of 27 percentage points since our mid-2016 opinion poll — the second greatest rise in population along with the United Kingdom and just after Angola.



WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THE CONDITIONS IMPOSED ON DRC BY EUROPEAN UNION FOR FINANCING THE UPCOMING ELECTIONS ? (% APPROUVE)



Le Conseil de sécurité de l'ONU © REUTERS/Brendan McDermid



19. India is included because of its extensive expertise in Electronic voting at a scale larger than DRC.

Methodology



The political polls consisted of telephone interviews of 1024 persons of 18 years of age and above in February 2017, of 1277 respondents in April 2017, of 1,129 persons in August 2017 of 1101 respondents in November 2017 , and of 1118 respondents in February 2018. The interviews took place from February 19 to 28, 2017, from August 6 to 11, 2017, from November 9 to 16, 2017 the 26 provinces of the country, and from January 30 to February 10, 2018, in 25 out of the 26 provinces. There were no respondents from Tshuapa province in February 2018.

Respondents were randomly selected from a list of phone numbers produced by a face-to-face poll published by CRG and BERCI in October 2016. That poll also provided

socioeconomic information about the respondents—their class, education levels, geographic locations, and age—that allowed us to weight the phone surveys to correct for any bias. The margin of error for the poll is ± 3 percent.

Phone interviews were conducted on electronic tablets using Open Data Kit (ODK) and uploaded directly to a cloud-based server hosted by Ona.io. Quality assurance was conducted in real-time as the surveys were uploaded, and feedback was provided to the teams on a regular basis. Enumerators were monitored for rushing, skipped questions, and other quality indicators. All response codes and the weighted and unweighted data files based upon the National Statistics Institute (INS) demographics can be provided upon request.



Created in 1990, the “Bureau d’Études, de Recherches, et de Consulting International” (BERCI) is a limited liability Company dedicated to undertake research and evaluation projects to improve evidence-based decision-making in DRC. The first Congolese public opinion research firm, BERCI’s activities focus on development, good governance, statebuilding and peacebuilding related research. Our non-profit polls are jointly coordinated with Fondation BERCI.

CONGO RESEARCH
GROUP



GROUPE D’ÉTUDE
SUR LE CONGO

The Congo Research Group (CRG) is an independent, non-profit research project dedicated to understanding the violence that affects millions of Congolese. We carry out rigorous research on different aspects of the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. All of our research is informed by deep historical and social knowledge of the problem at hand. We are based at the Center on International Cooperation at New York University.

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