

Democratic Republic of Congo Opinion Poll

Elections 2018 : An Anxious Electorate Demands Change



“ “

I fully trust all those who have been sanctioned, especially the military officers; I know they are defending the rule of law.

I am told that if everything goes well during the elections, the sanctions could be lifted. But I don't care!

As for the elections, everything will be fine, and it will not depend on the sanctions. It will be the best elections this country has had since 1959. I think we will have been on the right side of history.

The Congo will never be on its knees, it will always be standing upright.

Joseph Kabila, November 2018

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 undertake 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.

Ipsos is one of the leading marketing and opinion research agencies in the world. With offices in 86 countries and associates all over the world Ipsos is capable to organize and execute research projects in more than 100 countries. Election polling and opinion research is one of the specialities in Ipsos and social researchers co-operate to give our clients the benefit of global experience and local knowledge. The Public Affairs division in Ipsos South Africa is well-known for the accuracy, consistency and strategic value of our opinion polls and election surveys.

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Executive Summary

With only days left before presidential and legislative elections in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Congo Research Group (CRG) at New York University is publishing simultaneous polls conducted by the Bureau d'Études, de Recherches, et de Consulting International (BERCI) and Ipsos South Africa with its partner GeoPoll. The polls reveal an electorate eager for change. Here are the main conclusions:

- **If elections are free and fair, an opposition candidate would be almost certain to win the presidency.** According to our survey, Martin Fayulu is clearly the favorite, with 47% (BERCI: 45%, Ipsos/GeoPoll: 49%) of the intended vote, ahead of 23% for Felix Tshisekedi (BERCI: 28%, Ipsos/GeoPoll: 20%); and 19% (BERCI: 20%, Ipsos/GeoPoll: 18%) for Emmanuel Shadary.
- **This is a remarkable rise in popularity for a politician who was little known outside of Kinshasa a year ago.** Fayulu achieved a clear majority in most of the 26 provinces, with the exception of Ituri, Sankuru and Maniema, which favored Shadary, and South Kivu, Kasai Central, Kasai, Kasai Oriental and of Upper Lomami, where a majority supported Tshisekedi.
- **The potential for violence is extremely high.** A few days before the CENI postponement, 48% of respon-

dents (BERCI: 65%, Ipsos/GeoPoll: 30%) said they would "most certainly and/or probably" protest against rigged elections. An alarming percentage of respondents (BERCI: 63%, Ipsos/GeoPoll: 43%) indicated that they would not accept the results if Shadary won, and 53% (BERCI: 63%, Ipsos/GeoPoll: 43%) do not trust courts to fairly resolve electoral disputes.

- **This survey, like previous ones, reveals a politically aware and motivated electorate.** 98% of respondents (identical for BERCI and Ipsos/GeoPoll) registered to vote in the next elections and among these, 91% (BERCI: 90%, Ipsos/GeoPoll: 92%) and 98% (BERCI: 97% Ipsos/GeoPoll: 98%) intend to vote in the legislative and presidential elections.

While both polling firms used the same questionnaire, their methodology differed slightly. BERCI interviewed 1,196 people from a list of 2,000 phone numbers it had obtained through a randomized face-to-face nationwide poll together with CRG in 2016 of 7500 household across from 469 urban and rural sites. Ipsos/GeoPoll selected respondents through a Random Digit Dialing (RDD) methodology, reaching 902 persons aged 18 years old and above from a 1,5 million nationwide database of Congolese phone numbers. While both polls reached broadly similar conclusions, there were also differences.¹



1. There are several possible explanations for these differences. BERCI had interviewed many of their respondents several times over the past two years, while this was the first time respondents had been polled by Ipsos/GeoPoll, which could have influenced how open they were. The Ipsos/GeoPoll poll also included a greater proportion of well-educated and wealthier voters, and did not achieve high response rates in Kinshasa, South Kivu, Kasai Central and Kasai Oriental provinces.

Introduction

On Sunday, December 30th 2018 Congolese are due to head to the polls in one of the most important elections in the country's history. President Joseph Kabila is term-limited and must hand over power to a successor. While this should mark the first democratic transfer of executive power since independence in 1960, the electoral process has been deeply controversial since its onset.

Chaotic electoral process

As argued in a series of reports released by CRG about the elections, the process has suffered from politicized institutions, technical flaws, and the instrumentalization of the state by the ruling coalition.

The presidency exercises significant influence over the electoral institutions, in particular the electoral commission and the constitutional court, which would settle any disputes in the presidential race. The voter register includes almost seven million voters without biometric identification, and there have been large, suspicious variations in the growth of the electorate across the 26 provinces. The ruling parties, which have forged the Front Commun pour le Congo (FCC) coalition, controls the state apparatus and has used police, army, and administrative officials to harass and constrain the opposition. Elections have been pushed back by over two years since their original December 2016 date, prolonging the mandates of all elected institutions. These flaws have been compounded by a series of controversies in the last months before the elections. On December 13, ten days before Election day, thousands of voting machines and ballot boxes were allegedly destroyed by a fire in one of the main electoral commission (CENI) depot in Kinshasa, representing about 70% of the voting materiel due to be used in the capital. Nonetheless, the electoral commission insisted that elections would still take place on December 23rd. Up until the week before the elections, tons of crucial election documents had not reached their destinations, and there were many reports of polling stations that have not even received a voting machine or the necessary training to use one. Finally, three days before Election Day, CENI announced that the polls would be postponed by a week to December 30, 2018.



The fire, but also an ongoing Ebola outbreak and erratic ethnic violence were presented as the main reasons for the delay. Its president, Corneille Nangaa, added that political campaigns would still have to end on December 21st, as scheduled by the electoral law, two days ahead of the initial Election Day of December 23rd, stirring further discord. Nonetheless, while opposition parties have warned against the risks of any further delays, the main opposition coalitions cautiously accepted this third adjournment, while urging their supporters to accept their decision. A further decision by the CENI on December to postpone elections in four of the 181 electoral districts—Beni, Beni town, Butembo, and Yumbi—due to an Ebola outbreak and communal violence also provoked an outcry.

The election campaign has been marred by extensive violence and the repression of civil liberties. The Association Congolaise d'Accès à la Justice, (ACAJ) documented 152 cases of human rights violations linked to the election campaign, including 10 deaths and 50 cases of physical injuries.

The Presidential Race

Two of the most prominent opposition candidates, Jean-Pierre Bemba and Moïse Katumbi, have been excluded from the race, the former because he had been sentenced by the International Criminal Court for witness tampering, and latter because he had been sentenced in absentia for real estate fraud and had not been able to return to the country to register his candidacy. A former prime minister, Adolphe Muzito, has also been barred from running by the electoral commission.

The Geneva debacle and its consequences

In the run-up to the elections, the seven main opposition candidates attempted to unite behind a single candidate, convening a meeting in Geneva on November 11th. All the major contenders—Vital Kamerhe, Felix Tshisekedi, and Freddy Matungulu, as well as the three excluded candidates—backed Martin Fayulu. Within 48 hours, however, the deal collapsed as Kamerhe and Tshisekedi withdrew, either saying they had been tricked or that their constituency (la base) rejected the alliance. Kamerhe, who had placed third in the 2011 elections, then backed Tshisekedi, creating the Cap pour le changement (Cach) coalition. This process created significant discord within the opposition. Our data indicates a net preference for the Lamuka versus Cach—65% (BERCI: 61%; Ipsos/GeoPoll: 68%) of approval rating compared with 43% (BERCI: 45%; Ipsos/GeoPoll: 40%). There are now sixteen candidates competing for the presidency, although only three candidates campaigned most of the country; almost all the other candidates did not leave Kinshasa.

The ruling coalition

The ruling coalition is backing Emmanuel Ramazani Shadary, a former interior minister who became their surprise candidate in August 2018. Shadary has no real political base of his own and relies on the current president for funding and on the support of the ruling coalition Front Commun pour le Congo (FCC), which registered an approval rating of only 28% (BERCI: 24%; Ipsos/GeoPoll: 32%) in our poll, for mobilizing voters.



If elections are free and fair, an opposition leader would be certain to win the presidency.

In our poll, only 19% (BERCI:20%; Ipsos/GeoPoll: 18%) would vote for Emmanuel Shadary for the presidency. This confirms a general trend in which the ruling coalition has been confined to around 20 percent support in CRG/BERCI polls over the past two years.

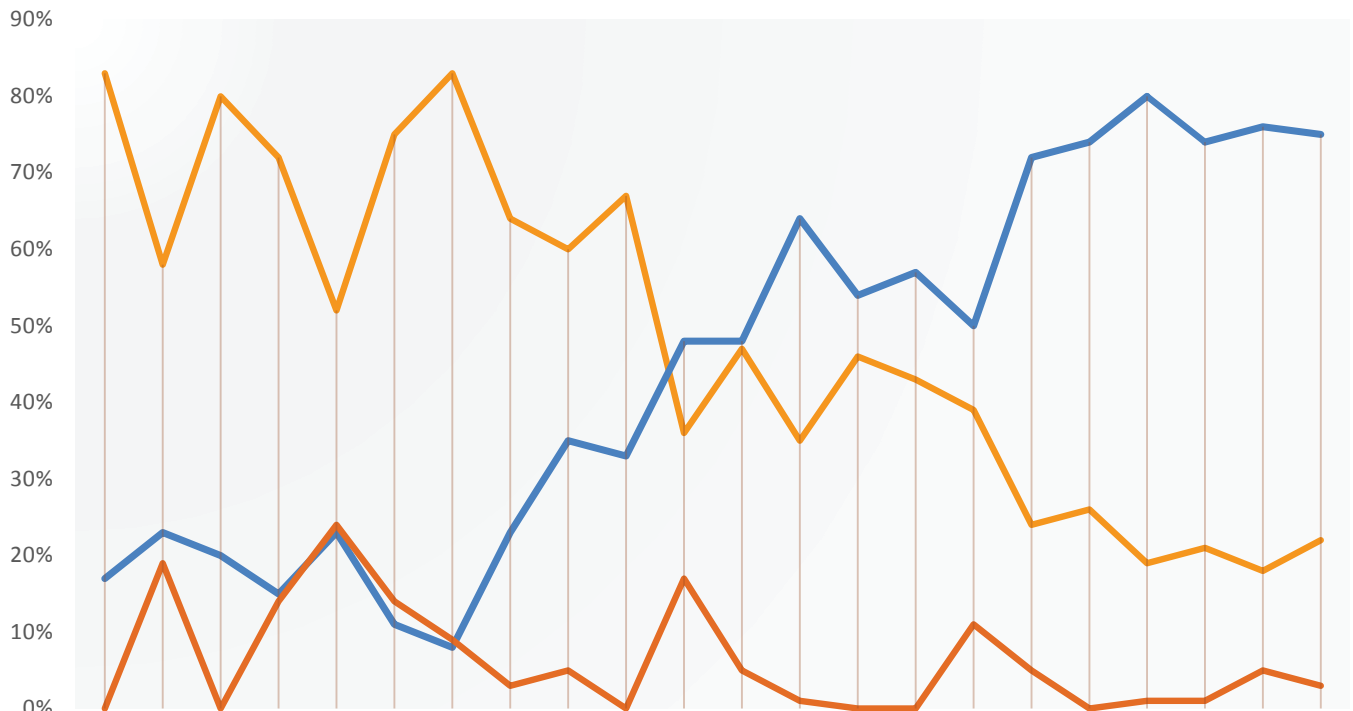
In the BERCI/CRG October poll, Shadary obtained 16% of the vote, while in the BERCI/CRG July poll before Shadary's designation all of the presidential candidates in the ruling coalition obtained 15% of the respondents' intended votes. This holds even for more distant polls: in April 2017, a BERCI/CRG poll found that altogether, pro-Kabila presidential candidates would garner around 12% of the vote. Given this context, Shadary has been able to increase his prospective vote share, perhaps an indication of the well-resourced election campaign, or the intimidation of opposition supporters.

However, according to the BERCI/CRG follow-up poll in the last week before elections, he lost almost 8 percent of intended votes following the most recent election delay, falling back to the April 2012 level with a score of 12%. The percentage of respondents that would "most certainly" or "probably" protest rigged elections increased by 12 percent within the BERCI sample compared with just a few weeks earlier, while those that would "most certainly" or "probably" support a protest even if they don't participate increased by 9 percent. Likewise, if elections are delayed past December 30, the percentage of the respondents willing to take part in a public demonstration increases by 13 percent.

When asked which comes closest to their feelings about the direction the country is headed under Joseph Kabila, a large majority of the respondents (65%) feels "angry", while 22% are "dissatisfied, but not angry", 5% feel "satisfied, but not enthusiastic", and only 8% are "enthusiastic".



DO YOU HAVE A GOOD OPINION, BAD OPINION, OR NO OPINION AT ALL OF PRESIDENT JOSEPH KABILA?¹



	Juillet 2001	Oct. 2001	Nov. 2001	Jan. 2002	Fév. 2002	Juillet 2003*	Oct. 2003**	Oct. 2007*	Avril 2009	Juin 2010	Sept. 2011	Sept. 2014	Jan. 2015	Mars 2015	Fév. 2016	Mai 2016*	Fév. 2017*	Août 2017	Fév. 2018	Juillet 2018	Oct. 2018	Dec. 2018
Good opinion	83%	58%	80%	72%	52%	75%	83%	64%	60%	67%	36%	47%	35%	46%	43%	39%	24%	26%	19%	21%	18%	22%
Bad opinion	17%	23%	20%	15%	23%	11%	8%	23%	35%	33%	48%	48%	64%	54%	57%	50%	72%	74%	80%	74%	76%	75%
Don't know	0%	19%	0%	14%	24%	14%	9%	3%	5%	0%	17%	5%	1%	0%	0%	11%	5%	0%	1%	1%	3%	3%

1. (*) 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”.

The Main Opposition contenders

The opposition vote has been much more volatile. In April 2017, 38% of respondents said they would support Moïse Katumbi at the polls, while only 5% backed Tshisekedi and 1% were behind Fayulu. The first major shake-up occurred when Bemba was released from prison in June 2018. Our CRG/BERCI poll of July 2018 indicated that there were now three major contenders for the presidential elections: Katumbi, Bemba and Tshisekedi in statistical tie with 20% support each. The second major upheaval occurred when Katumbi and Bemba were excluded from the presidential race in August 2018. Our first poll after this event propelled Tshisekedi to the top of the list with 36%, followed by Kamerhe with 17% and Fayulu with 8%. However, after that came the debacle in Geneva, which badly damaged the reputation of Kamerhe and Tshisekedi, while Bemba and Katumbi threw their weight behind Fayulu.

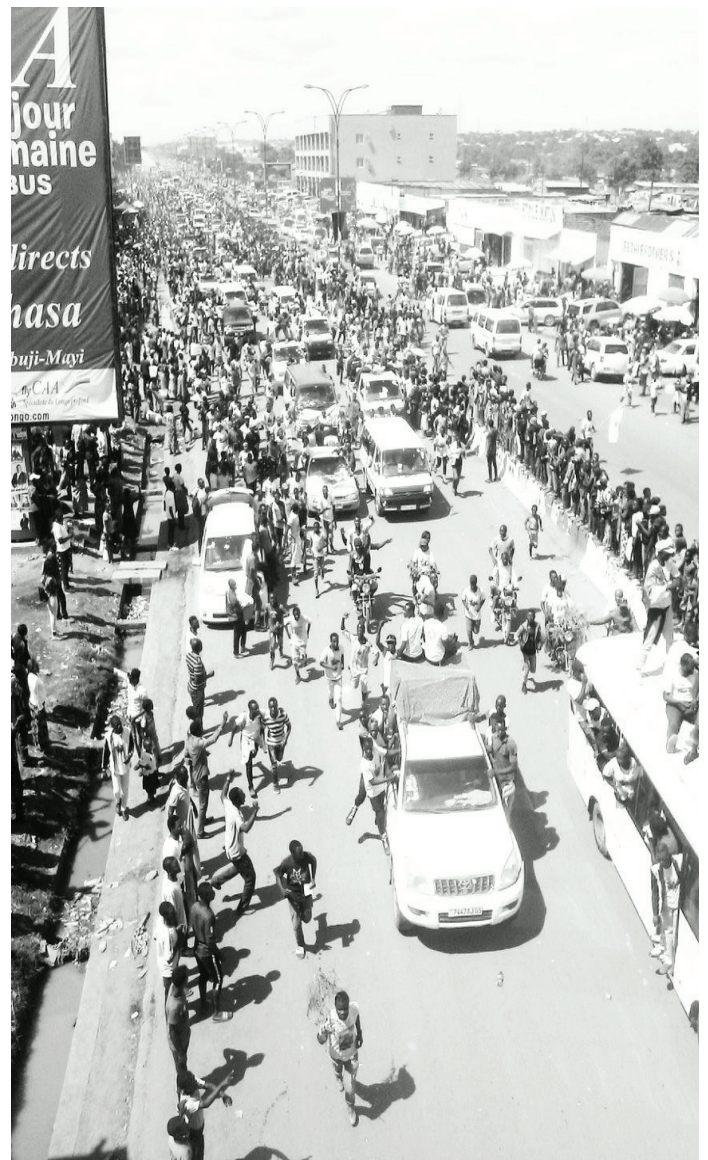
Despite the brunt of repression being targeted at his campaign, Fayulu has clearly emerged as the frontrunner, gleaning 47% (BERCI: 45%; Ipsos/GeoPoll: 49%) of the intended vote, ahead of Tshisekedi's 24% (BERCI: 28%; Ipsos/GeoPoll: 20%).

[It is important to note that due to time and logistical constraints Ipsos/GeoPoll was not able to obtain an adequate proportion of respondents in four provinces in which the Tshisekedi /Kamerhe ticket is popular: Kinshasa, South Kivu, Kasai Central, and Kasai Oriental. This may have diminished their support in this poll.]

Fayulu gained a clear majority in most of the 26 provinces, with the exception of Ituri, Sankuru and Maniema, which favored Shadary, and South Kivu, Kasai Central, Kasai, Kasai Oriental, and Haut Lomami where a majority backed Tshisekedi. This is an astounding rise in popularity and prominence for a politician who was barely known outside of Kinshasa a year ago. While it is unclear what exactly led to Fayulu's surge in popularity, it is clear that Tshisekedi and Kamerhe's personal approval ratings have suffered from the Geneva talks, with a respective decline of 19% and 22% of people saying they good opinion of them in BERCI's polling, versus a 4% and 5% gain for Fayulu and Muzito respectively. But the popularity of other opposition leaders has also dropped since last October: Bemba's approval rating dropped by 19%, while that of Katumbi fell by 8% in BERCI's polling.

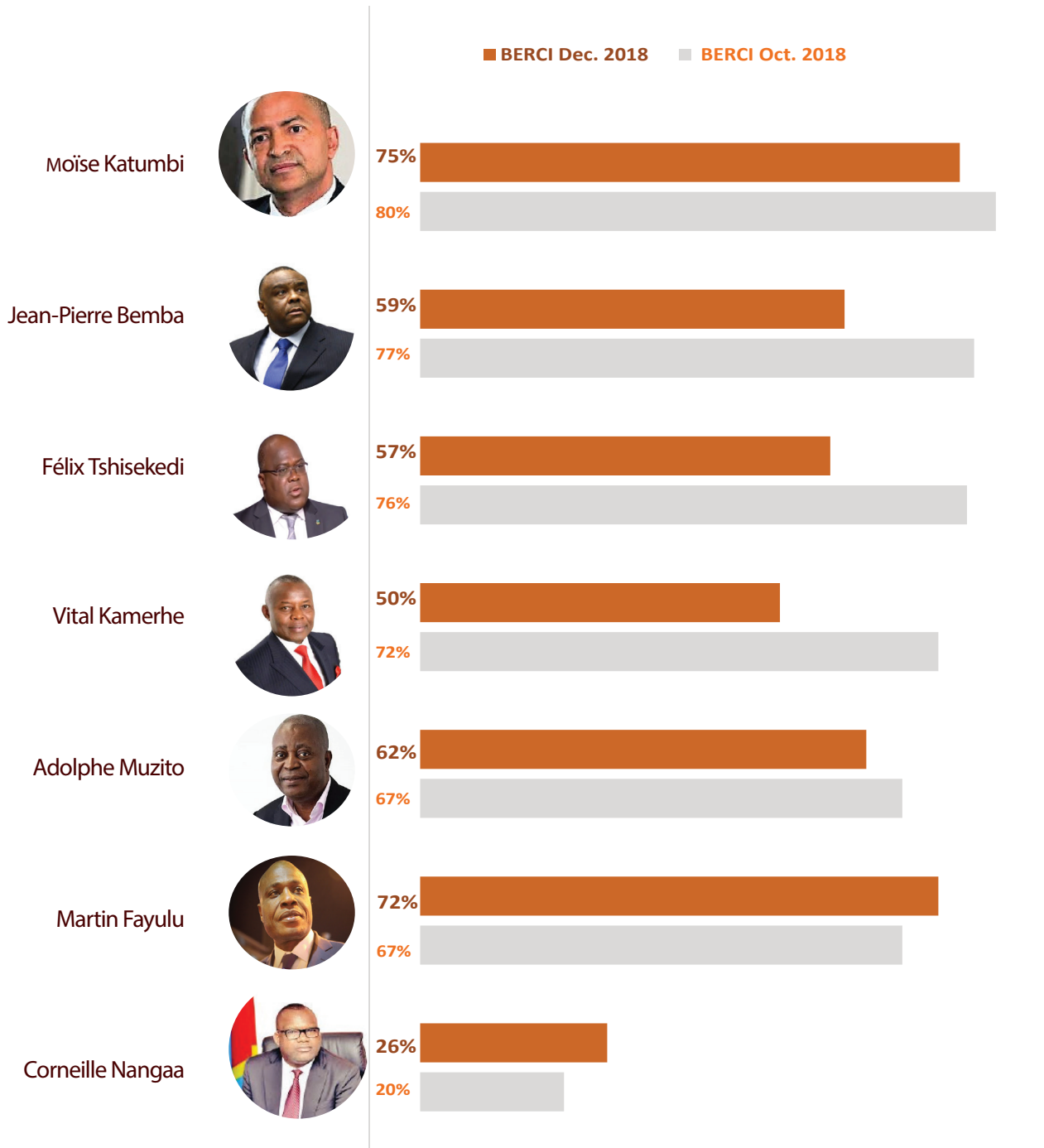
In BERCI's latest poll conducted during the week leading to the December 30 elections indicates that the most important quality that mattered in deciding how respondents will vote was:

- He is the embodiment of change (36%),
- He stands up for what he believes in (15%);
- He has the right experience (15%),
- He has a positive message (12%);
- He can defeat the majority [the ruling coalition] (9%).

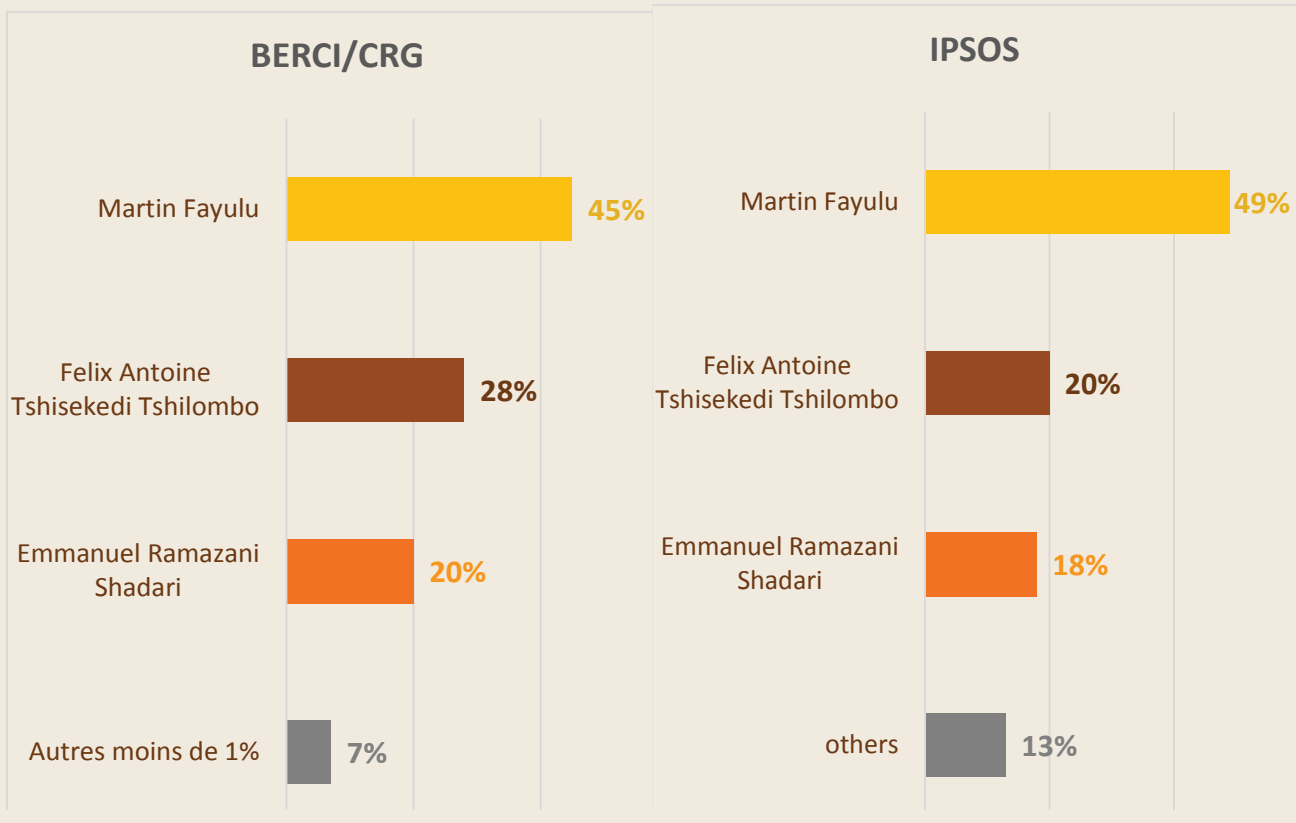


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WHAT IS YOUR OPINION OF THE FOLLOWING PERSONALITIES ? (GOOD OPINION ONLY)



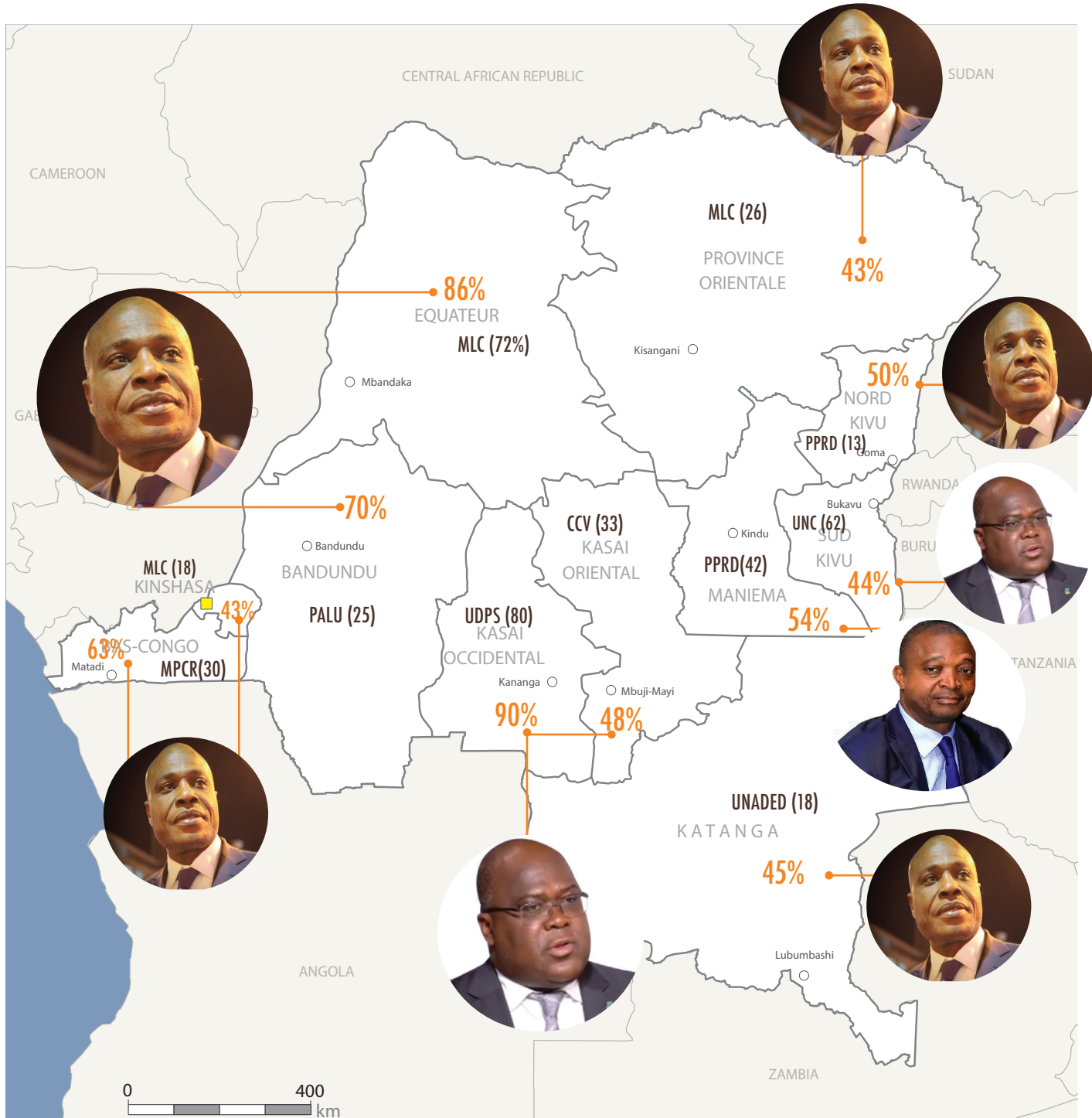
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2. Inadvertently, Ipsos frequencies in the press release included non-respondents. BERCI and IPSOS frequencies presented above exclude non-respondents, resulting in a slight change from the initial figures published.



PREFERRED CANDIDATE AND POLITICAL PARTY INTENDED VOTES IN THE 11 PROVINCES (%)



The Legislative Race

Legislative elections are difficult to poll at the national level. The new electoral law passed in January 2018 requires parties to get one percent of all legislative votes nationally in order to win seats in parliament. This threshold would have disqualified most of the parties currently in the national assembly, reducing their number from 98 to 21. In addition, a nationwide poll cannot replicate the race for seats within the 181 different constituencies across the country.

The question we asked about the legislative election was an open-ended one: If elections were held this Sunday, which political party would you vote for? Respondents could then provide any party or alliances name they wanted. The BERCI poll indicates that MLC is leading the intended vote at the national level with 17%, followed by UDPS with 16%, PPRD with 11%, UNC with 7%, ARC/Kamitatu (5%), UNADEF (4%); PALU, UNAFEC and ECidé with 3% each), followed with UDPS/Kibassa, CCU, and CNC with 2% each and MPCR, AFDC, ABAKO, as well as MPR all with 1%; all the others registered parties obtained less than 1%. This suggests a highly fragmented national assembly in which no coalition has an outright majority.

High potential for further unrest

The potential for unrest is extremely high. Several days before CENI's postponement, 48% (BERCI: 65%; Ipsos/GeoPoll: 30%) of respondents said that they would "most certainly and/or probably" protest rigged elections, while 36% (BERCI: 38%; Ipsos/GeoPoll: 34%) would "most certainly and/or probably" support a protest even if they don't participate. In addition, 43% (BERCI: 60%; Ipsos/GeoPoll: 26%) of the respondents declared their willingness to take part to a public demonstration if elections were delayed, and 39% (BERCI: 43%; Ipsos/GeoPoll: 34%) would support such an action without joining it. An alarming 53% (BERCI: 63%; Ipsos/GeoPoll: 43%) of the respondents said they would not accept the results if Shadary wins, and 53% (BERCI: 63%; Ipsos/GeoPoll: 43%) do not trust the courts to fairly resolve electoral dispute. If Shadary is proclaimed the winner, as many analysts suspect, over 80% will have not voted for him, depriving him

of legitimacy. According to this polling data, if the turnout is around 65% as in previous elections, the equivalent of between 6 and 7 million votes would have to be rigged, or approximately 25% of all ballots cast, in order to ensure his victory.

A brief follow-up poll conducted by BERCI just after the election delay was announced suggests that opposition to the government is rising:

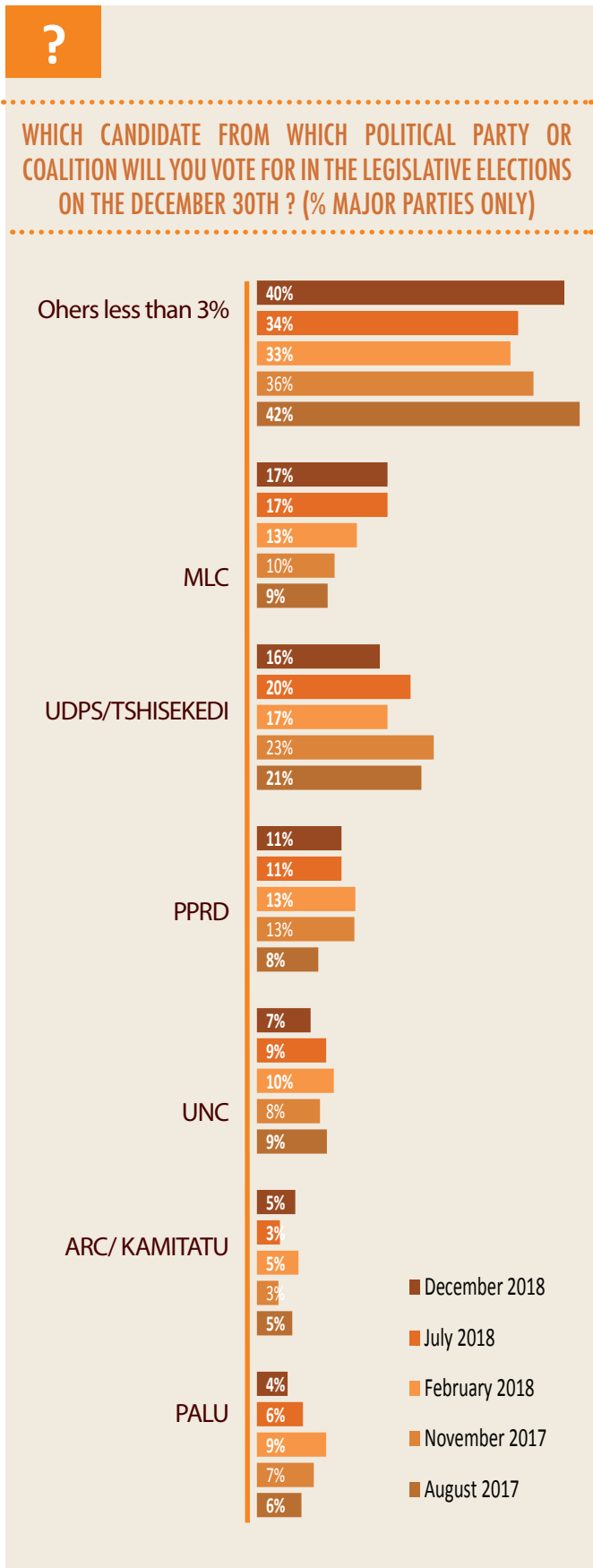
- **The percentage of respondents that would "most certainly" or "probably" protest rigged elections increased by 12 percent within the BERCI sample compared with just a few weeks earlier, while those that would "most certainly" or "probably" support a protest even if they don't participate increased by 9 percent.**
- **Likewise, if elections are delayed past December 30, the percentage of the respondents willing to take part in a public demonstration increases by 13 percent.**
- **When asked which comes closest to their feelings about the direction the country is headed under Joseph Kabila, a large majority of the respondents (65%) feels "angry", while 22% are "dissatisfied, but not angry", 5% feel "satisfied, but not enthusiastic", and only 8% are "enthusiastic".**

The Congo ranks among the poorest countries in the world at 176 out of 189 countries worldwide on the most recent United Nations Human Development report (2018). But despite the portrayal in many media of the Congo as a mess of violence and corruption, this poll, as our past ones, reveals a deeply aware and motivated electorate. 98 percent of respondents (same for BERCI and Ipsos/GeoPoll) have registered to vote for the upcoming elections and among those, 91% (BERCI: 90%; Ipsos/GeoPoll: 92%) to 98% (BERCI: 97%; Ipsos/GeoPoll: 98%) intend on voting for the legislative and presidential races respectively. BERCI's latest poll results conducted during this last week of December indicate that 97% of the respondents considered the act of voting as very important (68%) or important (29%), many of whom (64%) earn less than two dollars a day, according to 2012 National Statistical Institutes figures.

Support for the Electoral Process

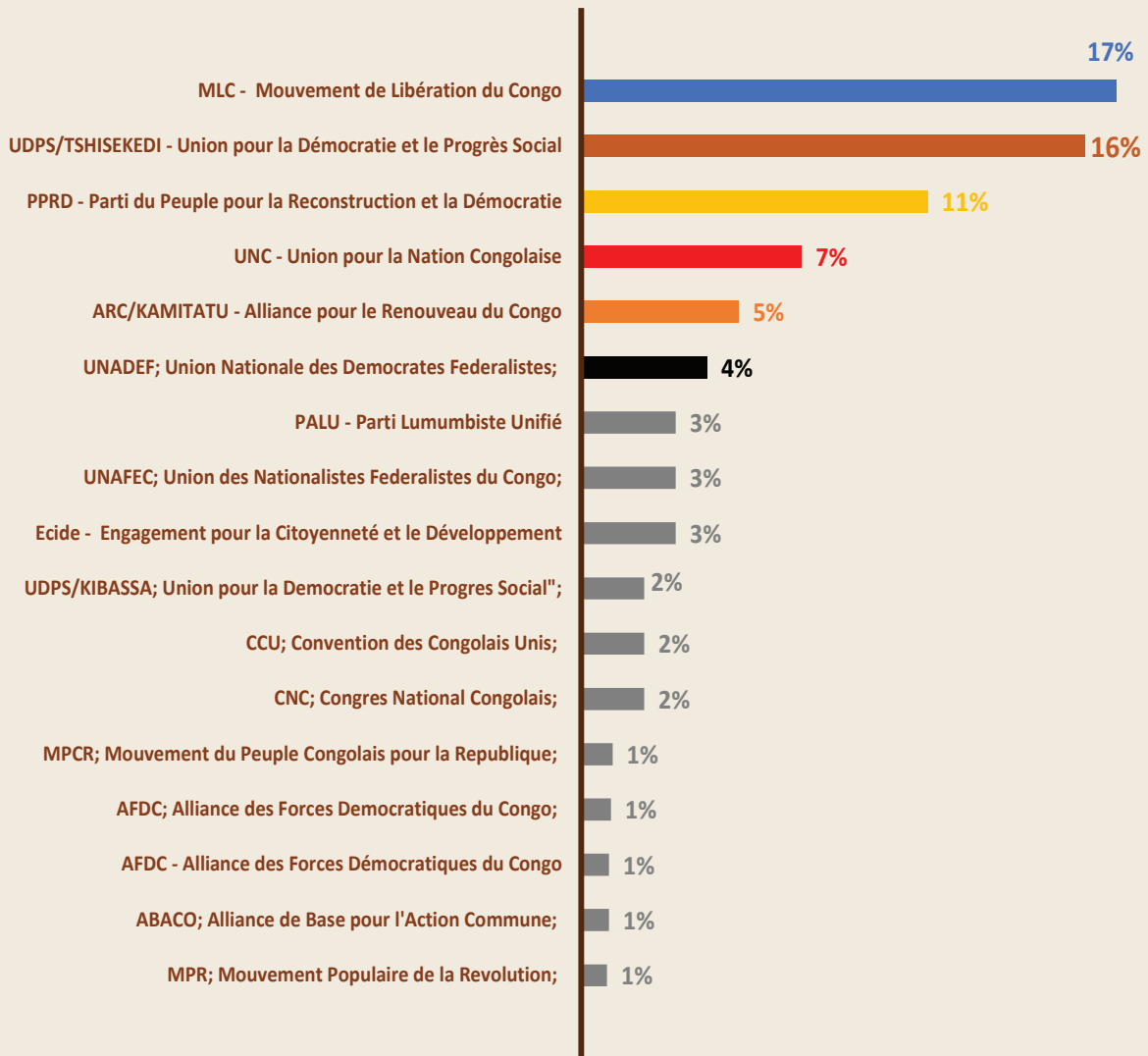
There will be three simultaneous elections on December 30th: for the presidency, the national assembly, and provincial assemblies. Around 40 million people are eligible to vote at 21,699 polling centers and will choose between 16 presidential, 15,358 national legislative, and 19,640 provincial legislative candidates. The means of voting is also controversial: the electoral commission introduced a voting machine late in the electoral process, despite protests by the opposition. Voters will introduce a paper ballot into the machine, select their presidential, national and provincial legislative candidates on a touch screen, then print the ballot and insert it into a box.

There are far fewer foreign observation missions deployed than in the past two elections. The European Union and the Carter Center, who fielded to most important long-term observation missions in 2011, will not be present. Instead, regional delegations from the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), and the African Union (AU) will field the bulk of foreign observers, while Congolese civil society plans on deploying over 60,000 observers. Our December poll finds that 91% (BERCI: 85%; Ipsos/GeoPoll: 96%) of respondents would have approved of European and American observers missions.





WHICH CANDIDATE FROM WHICH POLITICAL PARTY OR COALITION WILL YOU VOTE FOR IN THE LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS ON THE DECEMBER 30 ? (PARTIES ABOVE 1% ONLY)



Methodology

This poll was conducted simultaneously by BERCI/CRG and Ipsos polling companies. Both companies used the same questionnaire and similar methodologies. BERCI/CRG sampled from a list of 2,000 phone numbers we had obtained through a randomized face-to-face nationwide poll in 2016 of 7500 household across from 469 urban and rural sites, while Ipsos selected through a Random Digit Dialing (RDD) methodology, 1000 persons aged 18 years old and above from a 1,5 million nationwide database of Congolese phone numbers. BERCI poll was then weighted for geographic location based on the electoral commission voter registry, while gender, urban and rural representation, based on National Statistical Institute (INS) 2017 projection. The same demographic parameters were used as quotas for IPSOS sample.

The margin of erreur was around +/- 3%.

The BERCI polls were conducted between December 17th and 22nd 2018, and December 24th to 27th, 2018, while the Ipsos poll was conducted from December 19th to 27th 2018.

The main difference between the two samples was the respondents' level of education, but the two research complemented each other and their data converged regarding the outcome of the Congolese elections. Ipsos respondents were highly educated and a majority (54%) with a university level education. BERCI's respondents had a lower education level with a primary or secondary school degree (68%), more representative of the Congolese general population. The age and geographical location of the respondents also varied but those variations were corrected with weights based on demographic parameters of the voters registry of the electoral commission.

Both polls completed each others and enables us to grasp the complexity of the Congolese electorate: their similarities and their differences.

Most importantly taken together, those two polls present a fairly objective perspective of the electoral process and a gleams of Congo's future had this process been free and fair.

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Créé en 1990, le « Bureau d'Études, de Recherches, et de Consulting International » (BERCI) est une société à responsabilité limitée dédiée à la mise en œuvre des projets de recherche et d'évaluation pour améliorer la prise de décisions fondées sur des données factuelles en BERCI. Premier Institut de Sondage congolais, les activités de recherche de BERCI sont centrées sur des thématiques liées au développement, à la bonne gouvernance, au renforcement de l'État et à la consolidation de la paix. Les sondages politiques BERCI à but non lucratif sont coordonnés conjointement par la fondation BERCI ASBL.

CONGO RESEARCH
GROUP



GROUPE D'ÉTUDE
SUR LE CONGO

Le groupe d'étude sur le Congo (GEC) est un projet de recherche indépendant, à but non lucratif dédié à la compréhension de la violence qui affecte des millions de Congolais. Nous effectuons des recherches rigoureuses sur les différents aspects du conflit en République Démocratique du Congo. Toutes nos études reposent sur une connaissance approfondie de l'histoire et de la sociologie de la problématique étudiée. Nous sommes basés au centre de coopération internationale à l'Université de New York.

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