

## Polity IV Country Report 2010: Democratic Republic of Congo

Score:	2009	2010	Change	<p>Authority Trends, 1960-2010: Congo-Kinshasa</p>		
<b>Polity:</b>	5	5	0			
<b>Democ:</b>	6	6	0			
<b>Autoc:</b>	1	1	0			
<b>Durable:</b>		4				
<b>Tentative:</b>		Yes				
SCODE	ZAI	CCODE	490	Date of Report	1 June 2011	
<b>Polity IV Component Variables</b>						
XRREG	XRCOMP	XROPEN	XCONST	PARREG	PARCOMP	
2	2	4	5	3	4	
<b>Date of Most Recent Polity Transition (3 or more point change)</b>						
End Date		6 December 1992		Begin Date		6 December 2006
<b>Polity Fragmentation: Yes (10-25%)</b>						
<b>Constitution</b>	18 February 2006					
<b>Executive(s)</b>	President Joseph Kabila (PPRD); initially gained office following the assassination of his father, Laurent Kabila, 16 January 2001; designated head of transitional government on 30 June 2003; directly elected, 30 July (44.8%) and 29 October 2006 (58.1%)					
<b>Legislature</b>	<p>Bicameral:</p> <p>National Assembly (500 seats; 61 directly elected, 439 proportionally elected; most recent elections, 30 July 2006)</p> <p>People's Party for Reconstruction and Democracy (PPRD): 111</p> <p>Movement for the Liberation of Congo (MLC): 64</p> <p>Unified Lumumbist Party (PALU): 34</p> <p>Social Movement for Renewal (MSR): 27</p> <p>Forces for Renewal (FR): 26</p> <p>Other parties: 175</p> <p>Non-partisans: 63</p> <p>Senate (108 seats; indirectly elected by provincial assemblies; most recent elections, 19 January 2007)</p> <p>PPRD: 22</p> <p>MLC: 14</p> <p>Other parties: 46</p> <p>Non-partisans: 26</p>					
	Supreme Court					

## **Narrative Description:<sup>1</sup>**

### **Executive Recruitment: Transitional or Restricted Elections (7)**

The politics of the (renamed) Democratic Republic of Congo since the fall of President Mobutu in 1996 have been characterized by political instability, civil war, and state failure. Laurent Kabila, a man who conducted an insignificant and largely ineffective 30-year guerrilla campaign against the authoritarian rule of President Mobutu Sese Seko in Zaire, assumed power in 1996 when state authority collapsed and President Mobutu fled the country. Kabila came to power in Kinshasa as a result of the ineffectiveness of President Mobutu to stop the descent of Zaire's eastern provinces of North and South Kivu into civil war. This civil violence was triggered by the 1994 Rwandan genocide that drove over one million Rwandan Hutu refugees and Interhamwe militiamen into Kivu. This mass migration had the effect of exacerbating pre-existing tensions between Tutsis and Hutus in the region. Fanning the fires in Kivu was Mobutu's decision to provide support to the Hutu rebels against the new Tutsi-dominated government in Rwanda. In response to this decision, the Rwandan government provided the Banyamulenge (ethnic Tutsis of Rwandan origin whose ancestors settled South Kivu province centuries ago) with support to stage an uprising in the summer of 1996 against the Mobutu government. Within a few months the Banyamulenge, in alliance with the Tutsi of North Kivu and followers of martyred Prime Minister Lumumba (headed by Kabila), had gained control over most of eastern Zaire. After a brief seven-month military campaign Kabila and his forces entered Kinshasa and assumed power.

While chosen by the Tutsi-government in Rwanda to act as a spokesperson for the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire (AFDL), this alliance of anti-Mobutu forces under Kabila's leadership quickly splintered after the fall of Mobutu. In the power vacuum that surrounded the collapse of the AFDL, Kabila actively consolidated his political authority in Kinshasa as the rest of the country rapidly descended into anarchy and civil war. Overlapping the domestic struggles for political power, territory and resources inside the newly named Democratic Republic of Congo were increasing military incursions by foreign actors. Since 1996 numerous African states (Angola, Namibia, Rwanda, Uganda, Zimbabwe and others) have been involved in the conflict in the DRC, some pursuing political agendas transcending their borders and some taking advantage of the chaos to enrich themselves through control of valuable resources (or both). Despite international fanfare, the Lusaka Accords of August 1999 failed to bring an end to the brutal violence, chaos, and humanitarian disaster that had engulfed much of the country.

On 16 January 2001 Laurent Kabila was assassinated, allegedly by a member of his presidential bodyguard. Kabila's son, Joseph, was designated as the new president of the DRC. Despite his relatively narrow political base, Joseph Kabila has shown himself to be an adept political leader. Unlike his father, Joseph appears committed to the establishment of both peace and democracy in the DRC. President Kabila rekindled interest in the Lusaka Accords and began to liberalize the political arena in 2001-02. In early 2001 Uganda, Rwanda and Zimbabwe responded favorably to these peaceful overtures (and strong international pressure) and began the gradual process of removing their troops from the frontlines of the conflict. In May 2001 President Kabila lifted the ban on party political activity that had been in place since 1996. Kabila's efforts led to the creation of an Inter-Congolese Dialogue (ICD), which created a transitional government tasked with paving the road for democratic governance.

After many initial difficulties, on 17 December 2002 a comprehensive peace deal was signed at talks in Pretoria. President Kabila agreed to remain in office and four new vice-presidents were drawn from the government, RCD-Goma, the MLC and opposition groups. This national power-sharing government was inaugurated on 30 June 2003, under the condition that it would rule the country for two years and all former rebel groups would be authorized to function as legal political parties. By early 2004, however, the government was continuing to drag its feet on efforts to move the country toward national elections within the negotiated timetable. In response to several unsettling events that year and a general lack of cooperation between regional and national leaders, the UN extended its peacekeeping mandate in October 2004 for an additional six months.

Despite these difficulties the legislature of the transitional government succeeded in promulgating a new Constitution of the Third Republic in 2006, which was approved by national referendum and

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implemented 18 February 2006. Successful general elections followed on 30 July 2006. Presidential elections involved sixty candidates and resulted in a run-off election between Joseph Kabila and Jean-Pierre Bemba (Congolese Liberation Movement, MLC). Kabila received 58% of the vote in the October 29 run-off to win the presidency. The collection of election results proved chaotic and after allegations of fraud and violence continued, the Supreme Court certified the election on November 26.

Under the new constitution the president shares power with a prime minister, whom he appoints from the majority party in the National Assembly. Although officially running as an independent candidate, Kabila is associated with the People's Party for Reconstruction and Democracy (PPRD) which won the most legislative seats (111) in the 500 member National Assembly; the coalition "Alliance for a Presidential Majority" secured 316 seats. Kabila appointed Antoine Gizenga (PALU) as prime minister and asked him to form a government.

**Executive Constraints: Substantial Limitations (5)**

One of the first achievements of the transitional government's legislature was the creation of a new constitution, which decentralized political power with the creation of twenty-six provincial governments and created a separation of powers system within the national government. Although the national government still retains control over most political issues, the constitution did assign provinces specific issue realms over which they have complete control.

Under the new constitution the legislature is bicameral, consisting of a National Assembly (lower house) and Senate (upper house) The National Assembly consists of 500 members, sixty-one of whom are directly elected and 439 are proportionally elected, and the Senate consists of 108 members elected indirectly by twenty-six provincial governments. This legislative branch has emerged as largely independent from the executive, and places substantial limitations on executive power. The post of prime minister, for example, is appointed by the president, but can only be dismissed by the National Assembly, meaning that in practice the president must appoint a member supported by the majority of the Assembly. As the prime minister (currently Adolphe Muzito) shares executive power with the president, in a divided government the National Assembly would have a considerable institutional advantage over the presidency. In his December 2009 State of the Nation address, President Kabila indicated that he would like to see major reforms to the 2006 constitution. In particular, Kabila seems to favor abandoning the semi-presidential structure in favor of a more centralized presidential system.

The judicial branch is led by a Supreme Court and constituted to operate largely independent of executive influence. Given the DRC's recent emergence from general and long-term chaos, it will be several years before the practical nature of executive authority, and the effectiveness of constraints on that authority, can be confidently attested.

**Political Participation: Political Liberalization or Democratic Retrenchment: Persistent Overt Coercion (8)**

The DRC is a large country with many distinct regions that have at various times exercised considerable autonomy and/or resisted the imposition of central authority. Political participation in the DRC is characterized by personal and local loyalties and complicated by alliances with external actors. Uganda and Rwanda, in particular, have played significant roles in arming and encouraging local militias. The effects of ten years of political chaos and brutal violence and widespread rape, plunder, and pillage have exacted an enormous toll from the people and the country. The reestablishment of an effective central government and the substantial reduction of fighting in the DRC are the crucial first step in its reemergence. By late 2007, the central government appeared able to assert its authority over sixty percent of its territory, although it remained unable to deliver crucial services and administration. It has weathered several challenges to its legitimacy, including a serious challenge by the supporters of Jean-Pierre Bemba, who lost the presidential runoff election. With international assistance, the central government has made important progress in gaining control of the northeast Ituri province. In late 2007, the DRC government's most serious confrontation is in North Kivu with ethnic-Tutsi militias allied with General Laurent Nkunda and supported by Rwanda in the eastern territories. Their main demand is for the government to disarm and disband the ethnic-Hutu militias that fled to the DRC following the 1994 genocide in Rwanda and that continue to pose a threat to Rwanda's security. This confrontation led to open warfare in late 2007 and remains unresolved. Aside for the east of the country, most of the nation was relatively stable in 2009. In July 2010, President Kabila signed into law the establishment of a permanent National Independent Electoral Commission. Presidential and legislative elections are scheduled for 27 November 2011.