

# MONTHLY UPDATE

IN TRANSFORMATION  
INITIATIVE

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DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC  
OF CONGO (DRC)



## MAIN STORIES

A New Scramble for the DRC Begins as Tshisekedi Steadies the Ship

Anti-MONUSCO Protests Send Clear Message to Tshisekedi

Cobalt Price Jump Underscores Reliance on Metal for Electric Vehicle Batteries

## HIGHLIGHTS

- President Felix Tshisekedi is increasingly viewed internationally as the person to reverse the DRC's failed state reputation.
- Domestic protests against the UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) are a message to the president to improve security in eastern DRC.
- President Tshisekedi declared a "state of siege" in the Ituri and North Kivu provinces, and appointed controversial military governors.
- The DRC could benefit from the global shift to electric vehicles by improving human rights in the cobalt mining industry.
- The 2021 World Press Freedom Index has ranked DRC 149 out of 180 countries (1 = best).
- Willy Bakonga, a former education minister was arrested in connection with an embezzlement case.
- Justice Dieudonné Kaluba Dibwa is to head the DRC's Constitutional Court.
- Kalev Mutond, former Administrator General of the National Intelligence Agency (ANR) of the DRC, has evaded arrest but may struck a deal with the government.
- Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) attacks continued unabated while inter-militia fighting sporadically target civilians.
- President Tshisekedi wants to renegotiate mining contracts, particularly those signed with China by his predecessor Joseph Kabila.
- Fitch Solutions forecasts that the economy will expand by 4.0% and 5.0% in 2021 and 2022 respectively, after an estimated contraction

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of 0.8% in 2020. The recovery will be driven by rising investment, mainly in the mining sector, and by improving private sector consumption as restrictions are removed. However, headwinds are likely to persist in the form of continued intermittent restrictions to control the Covid-19 pandemic and a reduction in fiscal stimulus measures that were introduced in 2020 to support the economy.

- As of 18 May 2021, the DRC had recorded 30 609 coronavirus cases, 3 183 active cases, 776 deaths and 26 603 recoveries, while 155 288 tests were done.
- A lack of a vaccination plan has led the DRC to return 1.3 million doses of the AstraZeneca Covid-19 vaccines it received before the vaccines' expiry date.
- The DRC has the highest estimated number of food-insecure people worldwide, with 27.3 million people to be food insecure between February and July 2021.
- The DRC officially declared the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> Ebola outbreak.
- The banking sector is suffering from illicit financial flows linked to Dan Gertler's corrupt connection with former President Joseph Kabila.
- The DRC may join the East African Community (EAC) following a successful bilateral meeting between President Tshisekedi and Kenya's President Uhuru Kenyatta.
- The United States' (US) 2020 Report on International Religious Freedom Relations indicates an improvement of relations between the government and religious organisations.
- The European Union (EU) was requested to train DRC forces while the Ugandan Peoples Defence Force (UPDF) and the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (FARDC) are to deploy a joint force against the ADF.

