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DRC Crisis: parties' inability to address the deepening political crisis

NGOs, scholars and citizens' movement should rethink strategic ways of backing the Congolese National Episcopal Conference (CENCO) and international community efforts to solve the political crisis. This is the conclusion on '**DRC parties' inability to address the deepening political crisis**', a study made by Congolese researchers on 'political and civil rights' of the Lubumbashi based 'Research Institute on Human Rights' (*Institut de recherche en droits humains, IRDH*).

Indeed, Senators' mandate has expired in 2012, President Kabila's second and last term ended in December 2016 and members of National Assembly mandates terminated in February 2017. To address this *de facto* situation, political stakeholders signed a power sharing agreement on December 31st, 2016, under the mediation of the CENCO.

The implementation of the above agreement suffers from causes including: (i) the ruling party strategies to hang on power, (ii) the confusion created by the division of the opposition delegation to the talk and (iii) the international community attitude vis-à-vis the breach of good governance and democratic principles.

Relating to the first point, public institutions are reporting to the ruling elite and don't demonstrate the sense of accountability to the people. There is either indicator showing the implementation of policies that build strong institutions based on rule of law principles.

Contrariwise, there are signs of state's power capture and efforts to destabilize mechanisms of power transfer in a civilized manner. The attempt to undermine the 31st December CENCO led Accord is the last illustration.

IRDH researchers are also concerned by the fact that the empowerment of strong men and the weakening of public institutions, have been happening during the 18 years of heavy presence of the UN mission in the DRC (since 1999 - MONUC now MONUSCO).

On the other hand, individuals in opposition keep dividing the delegation to the 31st Agreement, creating more confusion that benefit to the chaotic situation and perpetuate the unconstitutional rule. They are fighting each other to share the very state's power captured by the ruling elite. Since the death of Etienne Tshisekedi, President of Rassemblement and the oversight organ of the 31st Accord (Conseil National de Suivi de l'Accord), the desire of many opposition leaders is to enter into any kind of power sharing agreement which highlights the pursuing of personal interests.

In sum, this discussion has demonstrated the importance of people participation to a democratic building and to hold politicians accountable for their actions. The protection of political and civil rights lay on the capacity of NGOs, scholars and citizens' movement to fight for their freedoms. No government, no opposition

parties either international communities can substitute people's participation as key stakeholder to building strong democratic institutions.

Rethinking ways out of the current DRC crisis, civil society organizations needs to mobilize, to the cause of implementing 31st December 2016 Agreement, larger groups and think tanks. Congolese research centers affiliated to universities and Lawyers' Bar Associations should be part of producers of new intellectual materials that help CENCO and other stakeholders to cover the gap created by political parties' failure to address the crisis.

Also, African and global think tanks should supplement to the significant gap of ideas and encourage intellectual innovation that help to overcome DRC endless political crisis observed since independence (1960), Mobutu dictatorship (1965-1997) and the African world war that killed millions of lives (1998-2002).