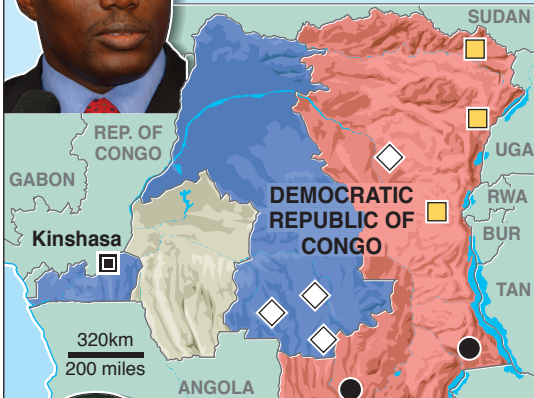


Rival candidates face off in Congo election

Tensions between rival parties remain high ahead of a presidential run-off and elections for provincial assemblies in the Democratic Republic of Congo – the first free elections for more than 40 years – aiming to draw a line under the country's 1998-2003 war which claimed four million lives



Joseph Kabila: 35-year-old President of Congo's transitional government gained 45% of vote in July's first round, short of 50% required to avoid run-off



July 30 vote by province
Kabila Bemba

Jean-Pierre Bemba
45-year-old former rebel leader, one of four vice-presidents in government, gained 20% of vote in July

▶ Kabila's power base is in east, while Bemba's includes capital, Kinshasa, and west, raising fears of dangerous east-west split

▶ Both candidates retain substantial private armies which could use force to contest result

▶ Armed groups still operate in east, where vast mineral reserves – including 30% of world's diamonds – are located

◆ Diamonds ■ Gold
● Copper / cobalt

▶ Continued violence has led to presence of world's largest peacekeeping force – more than 17,000 troops – in area as large as western Europe

▶ Some 1,500 international observers will monitor voting. Result of run-off due Nov 19

