

**2654. Mr S Mokgalapa (DA) to ask the President of the Republic:**

1. What are the details of the (a) stakeholders he engaged with during his visit to the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) in August 2018, (b) basis on which the specified stakeholders were chosen to engage with and (c) implications of the decision to engage with the specified stakeholders on the perception of South Africa as a neutral and unbiased mediator;
2. whether he met with any members of opposition political parties during the visit; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details;
3. (a) why did he praise President Kabila during his visit to the DRC, in view of President Kabila’s seemingly poor record of conducting free and fair elections and (b) does he hold the same positive views of President Kabila in light of subsequent developments and President Kabila’s perceived lack of commitment to free and fair elections, particularly after President Kabila rejected his special envoy? NW2943E

**REPLY:**

1. (a) I visited the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) to meet with President Kabila. On my departure from the DRC, a courtesy call by the ruling party’s Presidential candidate, Mr Emmanuel Ramazani Shadary, took place at the airport.

(b) The purpose of the visit to the DRC was to meet with President Kabila. Mr Shadary requested the courtesy call.

(c) None.

1. No other candidate requested to meet with me. If they had, I would certainly have been willing to meet them.
2. (a) I commended President Joseph Kabila for honouring the Congolese Constitution by not seeking a third term. This position is consistent with the Statement that was issued following the 38th Southern African Development Community (SADC) Summit of Heads of State and Government held in mid-August 2018 in Windhoek, Namibia, which also commended President Kabila and the Government of the Democratic Republic of Congo for upholding the Constitution.

(b) I maintain the same position on President Kabila’s decision not to seek a third term. Contrary to media reports former President Mbeki has not been appointed as a Special Envoy to the DRC, but has agreed to my request, given his vast experience, to assist the government with various issues in the Great Lakes region as a whole.