

## **First conversation between chief Kamwina Nsapu and members of parliament on 11<sup>th</sup> August 2016**

**Honourable:** you are a State representative in our villages where you rule like a traditional village chief. You are great ruler. You see the large number of people you have at home. Think hard so that we can find a solution that will help us understand your grievances, as well as make sure reparation is granted to you. So that the people live in peace. Do not harden your heart when taking on this fight. It will not end well for our electorate. This is why we came to you. We won't allow something bad to happen to you or to our people because of this deadlock.

**KN:** Here's what I think. I hope you can hear me well.

**Honourable:** Yes, I'm listening.

**KN:** Kamwina Nsapu Ntumba, whom I succeeded, died during the preparations of a meeting with Boshab. Boshab is the last person who knows how Kamwina Nsapu Ntumba died. In the name of tradition, I cannot speak on the phone with Boshab since he is an accomplice in the death of Kamwina Nsapu Ntumba. There's no way he can give such an ultimatum saying I have seventeen hours to surrender. I am not a foreigner, I am a son of this country, I am master of this land. I cannot threaten anyone, nor will I be threatened by anyone. So, I will never agree to this order to surrender in seventeen hours, no. Because this is intimidation. I'd rather die than surrender (honourable interrupts him). Thus will he find glory in killing me.

**Honourable:** chief, we are your children, we are begging you

**KN:** Let him gloat, having killed Kamwina Nsapu Pandi, the way he killed his predecessor Kamwina Nsapu Ntumba. Myself, I am not a treacherous traditional village chief. I would never want to sell the land of our ancestors. I would never betray my kingdom. I will not accept money from traitors. And I will not accept to be a member of their political party. I do not interfere in the State's affairs. I never ask for any power or anything else from the Governorate. I rule as a liberal. On top of being traditional village chief, I am a vet. I travel peacefully to South Africa, and I come home. Why did they provoke me? That's the problem. They touched the sacred objects that embody my power. Since they have desacralized my objects of power, I have said I would not accept any gift he wants to offer me. I stay put. And now that I mind my own business, why have they come to provoke me?

**Honourable:** But chief, it is for these grievances that we have come to you. We came here to listen. So that we can all sit together, you and us, the representatives of the people. We are your children. We have left Kinshasa to interfere, but why are you disappointing us?

**KN:** Have you come to my place and have I asked you to leave?

**Honourable:** As Honourable Mbaya told you, we have struggled, ever since we've arrived, to reach you. It is because of this situation that we have come here. We want to talk to you so that we can find a solution all of us together. We want to hear your demands in the presence of representatives of the State, so that we can, together, put an end to this conflict and so that you can go back to your old home/residence, or so that we can make up for the fact that people without any power touched your sacred objects. That way, your anger will go. A chief does not get upset that way.

**KN:** Come here, if you want...

**Honourable:** A chief does not get upset that way

**KN:** If you want us to come to an agreement, come and meet me here

**Honourable:** But, how will we get there?

**KN:** I'm sorry?

**Honourable:** How will we get there? That's what's difficult

**KN:** what barricades? Who set those barricades up?

**Honourable:** your people set them up, the military set some barricades up

**KN:** no, no, no

**Honourable:** So, what route shall we take to meet you?

**KN:** I thought you were talking about the barricades set up by the military. But if you're referring to those my men put up, come and you will be able to reach me without any problem

**Honourable:** Hang on, here's Honourable MP Kapongo, he wants to talk to you too

**Kapongo:** Hello chief

**KN:** ah, hello

**Kapongo:** Chief, there's never been a problem we couldn't find a solution to. Everyone with difficulties appeals to their traditional village chief. You have asked us to represent you in Kinshasa. It is you, the traditional village chiefs that have elected us. And we have for you the greatest esteem. But listen: when you see one of your loved ones being flogged, your heart cries out. When we heard that in Dibaya, our village, our fathers and mothers village, everyone is in disarray, that people have died; we have been ordered to come and meet with you to see if you could hear us out. Anger leads to ruin. Let your heart go of the anger, so that this conflict can end,

and lives of men and women be spared. We cannot sleep because of this situation, we even lost our appetite. What we really want is to see the end of this conflict, in a brotherly way, so that peace can be restored. A country torn apart by wars is bound to disappear. We do not want Dibaya to disappear, we do not want Kasai-Central to disappear. If we insist, it's only because we were asked to come and meet you so that you accept to hear us out. First of all, we would like for you to let go of this resentment; let us, the sons you gave a mandate to, come back to intercede in favour of their village. With all due respect, chief.

**KN:** Respect. But here's what I think: I invite you to come and meet me where I am. Have I refused to meet you? Come and let us sit together, since you claim you have a mandate to meet Kamwina Nsapu. Come, and I will agree to your stay, here, at my house, so we can talk at my home, I have not refused to see you. Let us talk, I haven't refused to meet you. Thus, after we've talked, you can report back to those you call the authority of the State, them, who are Congolese when we are foreigners. I'm not against meeting you, I will welcome you at my house. Why would the military refuse to let the MPs cross the barricades? How does that happen?

**Kapongo:** Chief, here's what we think: even during our ancestors' time, whenever there was something that needed to be settled, we would look for ways to solve the problem. You are very angry, we can hear it when you talk. But please first of all accept to let go of this anger. Once you've let go of this anger, we will be able to solve this issue in order for peace to come, we beg of you, our chief.

**KN:** I don't have any resentment. But I'm saying is this: Who will I go to in Kananga? Would you want me to fall into the hands of those I do not trust? The people are (MPs start talking among themselves. One of them says 'but we are here' (you can trust us). (Meanwhile, KN continues talking) Who will I go to in Kananga? (We can hear one of those who were speaking say: he doesn't trust us). My peers, the traditional village chiefs, will not agree to my coming to Kananga, nor will my people. Everyone will assume I'm going to my death. They don't trust, as you know. I cannot arrive in Kananga to give myself up in such a stupid manner. If I were to come, who will take me in? Who will insure my protection? (We can hear an MP say on the phone: us, we are here). So, I want you to contact Monusco so that they can protect me in Kananga. Which would be very simple by the way, since Monusco is a neutral force (we can hear: yes, that could be a solution). Monusco can protect me in Kananga.

**Kapongo:** Yes, chief, we have taken into account your proposal to get in touch with Monusco. It is good as long as human beings remain afraid. Even us, we are afraid since the area in which you already are is a military operations area. We also heard there had been massacres. That's what hurts. Women and children are in the bush. That some women abort because of stress isn't a good thing. Wherever there is war, there's nothing good left. Our goal is to find a solution to this issue. We will get back to you in twenty minutes, so that we all know what to think of your proposal.

**KN:** Yes, go get Monusco, it can come and pick me up. At least then, I'll know I will arrive... When it comes to other troops, I am wary of them... (In the meantime, someone says: ask him if we can send the archbishop)

**Kapongo:** Hello (KN says hello) what if we send His Eminence to pick you up (another says Madila) Madila

**KN:** Are you saying no to getting Monusco involved?

**Kapongo:** No, Monusco, it's possible

**KN:** Yes, do send for Monusco (Kapongo says: thank you while KN continues to speak) since Monusco is the neutral force

**Kapongo:** OK

New voice: There, chief, we'll call you right back

