

# Is Chinese-controlled copper and cobalt mining joint venture being turned into a political pawn in Congo?

- **DRC President Felix Tshisekedi, a critic of previous deals, will be seeking re-election in December**
- **Report from DRC state auditor calls for infrastructure investment to be increased by US\$17 billion**

Politics could be at play in the latest falling-out between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Chinese companies over a US\$6 billion minerals-for-infrastructure deal signed more than a decade ago that Kinshasa says was poorly negotiated and favoured the Chinese side.

DRC President Felix Tshisekedi will be seeking re-election on December 20, and observers say the DRC government is stepping up pressure on Sicominex, a joint venture by the DRC and Chinese companies, to force the renegotiation of the deal signed in 2008 as part of a plan to use the infrastructure projects as a campaign tool.

The DRC's General Inspectorate of Finance released a report last week that said the DRC was yet to benefit from the deal.

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