

# TODAY'S MEDIA TRENDS

## TELECONGO

MARCH 5, 2026

T H E G D E L T P R O J E C T

### CONGO 2026 ELECTION CAMPAIGN: PROJECTING INDISPENSABLE STABILITY

#### THE INCUMBENT'S NARRATIVE: THE "FIRST LOGISTICIAN"

#### LOGISTICS AS STATECRAFT & ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION

#### CHALLENGES BENEATH THE SURFACE

#### DEEP DIVE: TRENDS & THEMES

#### STRATEGIC FORESIGHT & IMPLICATIONS

#### RECOMMENDATIONS & IMPLICATIONS (POLICY & INVESTORS)

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THE INCUMBENT ADMINISTRATION OF DENIS SASSOU NGUESSO IS INTENSIFYING ITS CAMPAIGN FOR THE MARCH 15, 2026, PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION, LEVERAGING STATE INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS, TRADITIONAL ENDORSEMENTS, AND DIGITAL INFLUENCE TO PROJECT AN IMAGE OF INDISPENSABLE STABILITY.

### DAY-AT-A-GLANCE

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The Republic of the Congo is currently in the final stages of a high-intensity campaign for the presidential election scheduled for March 15, 2026. President Denis Sassou Nguesso (DSN) has dominated the domestic narrative, framing himself as the "first logistician" and the only guarantor of national peace. His campaign has successfully secured the [sacred endorsement of Téké traditional leaders](#) in the Plateaux department, who presented him with symbols of ancestral power to "combat his adversaries." This traditional validation is being synchronized with modern technological efforts, including the use of [AI-generated campaign music](#) to appeal to the

youth, highlighting a sophisticated, multi-layered approach to maintaining political control.

Simultaneously, the government is emphasizing "logistics" and "infrastructure" as the primary drivers of economic diversification away from oil. The [Association of Congolese Logisticians \(ALC\)](#) is being positioned as a scientific advisory body to professionalize the sector, while the [electrification of Eyo](#) and the development of the "Corridor 13" transit route are touted as tangible successes of the administration's "accelerated municipalization" policy. These developments are framed not merely as public works but as strategic geopolitical assets intended to integrate Congo into the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

However, beneath the surface of campaign pageantry, institutional challenges remain. In Malabo, the CEMAC Parliament has exposed significant [administrative lacunae and tax retention issues](#) that threaten the budget of the regional community. Domestically, the 14th anniversary of the [MPila munitions dump explosion](#) served as a somber reminder of past state failures, even as the government uses the occasion to perform acts of philanthropy and reinforce messages of unity. Meanwhile, the judiciary continues to process high-level [corruption and embezzlement cases](#), signaling a selective but firm push for legal accountability as the election nears.

## MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

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- **Presidential Campaign Escalation:** DSN's "Majority Presidential" campaign is visiting key departments, including Plateaux and Cuvette-Ouest, to secure departmental votes. [Director of campaign for DSN](#) in Makelekele is focused on mobilizing voters and fighting abstention, while [traditional ceremonies in Evo](#) characterize DSN as a "national heritage."
- **Opposition Activity:** Opposition candidates such as [Day Mafuula](#) (branded as "Moïse" in Likouala) and [Joseph Kinyumbi Kiambungu](#) are campaigning on platforms of professional training and youth employment, though they face a heavily resourced incumbent machine.
- **Regional Security Coordination:** Congolese and Angolan military commanders met at the border near Pointe-Noire to [strengthen security mechanisms](#) and intelligence sharing to combat cross-border threats, particularly regarding the Cabinda enclave.
- **Economic Diversification via Maritime Governance:** The launch of an [extensive study on maritime governance](#) by Éric Olivier Sébastien Dibas Frank argues for the "Blue Economy" to become the lung of Congolese development, pivoting toward the Atlantic Ocean.
- **Anti-Corruption Trials:** The Criminal Court of Brazzaville has opened proceedings against [Joibles Mayolas and others](#) for embezzlement of funds and money laundering, emphasizing the state's move toward rule of law during the election cycle.

## KEY GOVERNANCE TOPICS

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- **Succession & Stability:** The central narrative of the day is the [indispensability of DSN](#), with campaign materials arguing that his departure would lead to "chaotic situations" similar to post-Qaddafi Libya.
- **AI & Technology Policy:** In a notable shift in political communication, the DSN campaign is utilizing [AI-generated songs](#) to engage the youth and project a modern image of the 82-year-old incumbent.
- **Critical Infrastructure:** Energy projects are nearing completion, with the [high-tension post at Evo](#) ready to receive power, fulfilling a key "municipalization" promise to the Cuvette-Ouest region.
- **Food & Water Security:** The administration is pushing [agricultural mechanization](#) through training on Chinese-made tractors, aiming for food sovereignty and reducing the "housewife's basket" costs.
- **Biosurveillance / Disease Outbreaks:** International reporting highlights a [71% increase in cholera deaths](#) globally and the continued threat of Mpox, though the local Congolese focus remains on free diabetes and HIV/AIDS screening campaigns like [Operation Diamatonga](#).
- **Regional Influence:** Tensions within CEMAC were noted as some states [retain community integration taxes](#), hindering the regional body's budget and effectiveness.

## LEGISLATIVE ROUNDUP

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Legislative and regulatory focus this day centered on regional economic integration,

educational standards, and election management protocols.

- **BILLS DISCUSSED/DEBATED:**

- **Pre-school Education Standards:** Partners in education validated [new norms and standards](#) for pre-schooling, moving toward making this level of education mandatory and revising the school law currently before Parliament.
- **Maritime Code Reform:** Discussions on the [refit of the CEMAC Merchant Marine Code](#) were highlighted as essential for securing offshore activities and attracting investment.

- **HEARINGS & PRESS EVENTS:**

- **CNEI Press Briefing:** Henri Bouka, President of the National Independent Electoral Commission (CNEI), met with [newly appointed commissioners](#) to define their roles in distributing voter cards and compiling results for a transparent vote.
- **CEMAC Ordinary Session:** The CEMAC Parliament met in Malabo to [adopt the 2025 community report](#), while criticizing member states for failing to remit integration taxes.
- **National Campaign Spokesperson:** Anatole Collinet Makoso held a [mid-term campaign press conference](#), defending the DSN record on youth employment and the "Accelerating the March toward Development" program.

## **DEEP DIVE: TRENDS AND THEMES**

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**The Logistics of Power** The administration has transitioned from a purely ideological narrative to one of "Logistics as Statecraft." By labeling DSN the "First Logician," the

campaign bridges the gap between traditional authority and modern technocracy. The focus on [multimodal transport and corridor development](#) serves a dual purpose: it promises economic relief to a population struggling with inflation while simultaneously presenting the Congo as a [strategic maritime pivot](#) for the entire Gulf of Guinea. This theme suggests that only a leader with deep "logistical" experience can navigate the complexities of global supply chains and regional integration.

**Traditional Validation in a Digital Age** The campaign is expertly navigating the tension between ancient and modern. While [Téké notables clothe DSN in leopard skins](#) and perform libations to ancestral spirits, his media team is deploying [AI-enhanced propaganda](#). This "syncretic politics" aims to capture the entire demographic spectrum, ensuring that the youth see him as "branché" (plugged-in) while the rural elders see him as the rightful "mouiné" (traditional chief). The use of the term "Patrimoine National" (National Heritage) effectively attempts to place DSN above partisan politics, making a vote against him appear as a vote against Congolese identity itself.

**Institutionalizing Stability Through Fear of Chaos** A recurring subtext in both campaign speeches and "scientific" brochures is the threat of the "Libyan scenario." By explicitly citing the [fall of Muammar Qaddafi](#) as a cautionary tale, the administration is making a "law and order" argument that transcends the economy. This is reinforced by the heavy coverage of [border security meetings with Angola](#) and the 14th anniversary of the MPila disaster, reminding the public of the fragility of peace and the necessity of a "strong hand" at the helm.

## STRATEGIC FORESIGHT

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**Short Term (1-4 Weeks):** Expect a surge in government-led social initiatives and infrastructure inaugurations as the March 15 vote approaches. The distribution of [voter cards](#) will be a critical flashpoint; any delays or perceived biases could lead to localized protests. Security forces will likely increase their presence in Brazzaville and Pointe-Noire to prevent any pre-election unrest.

**Medium Term (1-6 Months):** Post-election, assuming a DSN victory, the government will likely move quickly to formalize the [maritime governance reforms](#) and push for more aggressive AfCFTA integration. The "departmentalization of agriculture" will see increased state investment, likely through continued [partnerships with Chinese firms](#) for equipment and training. Regional pressure on CEMAC members to remit taxes will likely increase to stabilize the regional bloc's finances.

**Long Term (1-5 Years):** The focus on "Corridor 13" and [smart port technology](#) at Pointe-Noire suggests an ambitious plan to make Congo the transit hub for Central Africa. However, the reliance on DSN's personal authority as "National Heritage" creates a significant long-term risk for institutional stability, as the state appears more dependent on his personal legacy than on robust, independent democratic institutions.

## RECOMMENDATIONS & IMPLICATIONS

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### For International Policy:

- The Congo-Angola border cooperation [targeting Cabinda security](#) indicates a tightening of regional security architecture; diplomatic missions should monitor for potential human rights implications in border zones.
- The shift toward "Blue Economy" governance suggests an opening for [maritime security partnerships](#) and infrastructure investment beyond the oil sector.
- Regional observers should note the [fissures in CEMAC](#) regarding integration taxes, which may signal a weakening of regional economic cohesion.

### For Private Sector/Investors:

- Agricultural Mechanization: The clear preference for [Chinese agricultural technology \(FM World\)](#) suggests a competitive disadvantage for Western equipment providers unless paired with similar state-backed training programs.
- Logistics and Supply Chain: The government's push to [professionalize the logistics sector](#) through the ALC offers opportunities for consulting and training firms specializing in multimodal transport.
- Regulatory Risk: High-level [corruption trials](#) during election cycles indicate a volatile legal environment where "lawfare" could be used against political or business rivals.

## ABOUT THIS REPORT

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**Today's Media Trends** is a public interest experiment in applying deep thematic trend analysis to television news coverage from around the world to explore how responsibly applied advanced AI can help journalists and scholars better understand the overarching trends, themes and patterns of our global world.

**No data is used to train or tune any AI model.**

Each morning, in collaboration with the Internet Archive's TV News Archive, we apply Google's Gemini 3 to deeply examine yesterday's coverage from each television news channel to tease out the overarching themes and trends of its news coverage into a richly annotated thematic analysis. Each high-level insight is connected back to the original broadcast, allowing journalists and scholars to understand the dominate themes and trends

and instantly click out to the underlying sources for details.

By helping journalists and scholars see the broader trends and patterns of global news coverage, this analysis helps them identify relevant stories and coverage they might not otherwise have encountered and uncover connections, emphases and narrative shifts that enable more comprehensive reporting and deeper, evidence-based research.

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