

**Parliamentary Committee of enquiry in charge of determining
the exact circumstances of the assassination of Patrice Lumumba
and the possible involvement of Belgian politicians**

Summary of the Activities, Expert's Report and full conclusions

The proposal to set up this enquiry committee was submitted by the PRL-FDF-MCC, Agalev-ECOLO, VLD, SP and VUID groups in the Chamber. On 2 February 2000 it was unanimously approved by the Commission for Foreign Relations. On 23 March 2000, the plenary meeting of the Chamber decided to form the investigation committee. Geert Versnick was appointed Chairman, assisted by a bureau with Claude Eerdeken as First Vice-Chairman, Herman Van Rompuy as Second Vice-Chairman and Daniel Bacquelaine, Ferdy Willems and Marie-Thérèse Coenen as reporters. In total, 15 commissioners¹ were appointed.

The creation of this investigation committee is a consequence of the debates held in the Commission for Foreign Relations on 8 December 1999 following the publication of the book "The Murder of Lumumba" by Ludo De Witte. The Minister had received questions about the possible responsibility of the Belgian authorities in this case, but had stated that he could not assess responsibility based on a book.

In order to reach a conclusion from an official Belgian instance, it was decided to create a parliamentary investigation committee.

Besides reaching conclusions about Belgian responsibilities in the murder of the first Prime Minister of the Congo, Patrice Lumumba (and his fellow-victims Okito and M'polo), it was also the intention to instigate a debate on colonisation and decolonisation.

One of the conditions of being able to look into the future open-mindedly is that one comes to terms with the past. The incompletely explained past inhibits collaboration with a number of countries from Central Africa. This obstacle needs to be removed now that it is clear that Belgium, together with its partners in the European Union, intend to take initiatives in order to make amends to that region and contribute to the well-being of the population by closer international collaboration.

The principle of a parliamentary investigation committee was adopted. It has the powers of an examining magistrate, which is a compelling and useful feature enabling free access to the required archives and the hearing of witnesses as well as the conduction of searches enabling a full investigation.

The Commission also decided to ask for the assistance of a number of experts who were responsible for content-related and historic-scientific work. It must be emphasized that the

¹ VLD (Flemish Liberal and Democratic Party) : [Jef Valkeniers](#), [Ludo Van Campenhout](#), [Geert Versnick](#), CD&V (Flemish Christian Democratic Party) : [Pieter De Crem](#), [Herman Van Rompuy](#), AGALEV-ECOLO (Flemish and French speaking Green Parties) : [Marie-Thérèse Coenen](#), [Leen Laenens](#), PS (French speaking Socialist Party) : [Jacques Chabot](#), [Claude Eerdeken](#), PRL FDF MCC (PRL = French speaking Liberal Party – FDF = Democratic Front of French speaking Inhabitants of Brussels – MCC = Movement of the Citizens for the Change) : [Daniel Bacquelaine](#), [Eric van Weddingen](#), VB (National Flemish Party) : [Francis Van den Eynde](#), SP•A (Flemish Socialist Party) : [Daan Schalck](#), PSC (French speaking Christian Democratic Party) : [Jacques Lefevre](#), VU&ID (Flemish Community Party) : [Ferdy Willems](#).

experts were able to work freely and fully independently, guaranteeing the scientific objectivity of this commission. The politicians then thoroughly analysed the expert reports (in addition to testimonies and working documents) to draw their conclusions and make political recommendations.

During the appointment of the experts, candidates were not only assessed on their scientific qualities but emphasis was also placed on their independence and neutrality. The college of experts² consisted of the following Professors:

Luc De Vos, Jules Gérard Libois, Emmanuel Gerard and Philippe Raxhon. In a number of specific assignments, they were assisted by Professors Eric David and Eric Suy, Jean Omasombo and subsequently, also, by Bart Preneel.

The experts divided their investigation into 4 different phases about which they reported in detail:

Phase 1: 30/06/'60 – 05/09/'60

Phase 2: 05/09/'60 – 10/10/'60

Phase 3: 10/10/'60 – 27/11/'60

Phase 4: 27/11/'60 – 17/01/'61

In addition, reports were submitted about "Secret Funds", "King Boudewijn and the Crisis in The Congo" the "*Union Minière*", the "*Sûreté de l'Etat*" and "Decoding coded telexes".

In addition to the scientific research of archives, hearings were organised with witnesses. A total of more than 40 witnesses were heard. As well as relatives of the victims, the authors of the most relevant books (Brassine and De Witte) were also heard. All relevant witnesses who were still alive were questioned: for example the Belgian, Congolese and Katangese Ministers of that time, the Belgian advisors and diplomats in Brussels, the Congo and Katanga of the time, ex-military and state security employees as well as citizens who played a role.

The following is a summary of the experts' report and the full conclusions of the investigation committee as well as an introduction to the committee's report.

² Mr. Jules Gérard-Libois, Chairman-founder of the *Centre de Recherche et d'Information Socio-politiques (CRISP)*, (Chairman)

Mr. Emmanuel Gerard, a Professor at the KUL ([Catholic University of Louvain](#)), (Secretary)

Mr. Luc De Vos, a Professor at the KMS ([Royal Military School](#)) and the KUL

Mr. Philippe Raxhon, a Professor at the UL ([University of Liège](#))

These 4 experts were assisted in their activities by an additional 4 experts for specific assignments:

Mr. Jean Omasombo, a Professor at the University of Kinshasa

Mr. Eric David, a Professor at the ULB ([Brussels University](#)) and Mr. Eric Suy, Emeritus Professor at the KUL, both because of their specialisation in international law

Mr. Bart Preneel, a Lecturer at the KUL was given a temporary assignment to decode a number of telexes