

[start, 00:00]

SPEAKER 3: It's filming. We can have a clap. Raise your hand a little, there you go. We're starting.

SPEAKER 2: So, if you want to resume...

SPEAKER 1: Then he promised. He said no, I'm waiting for the instruction, as soon as it is there, you will be received. December went by, January. And it was in February that the Minister of Foreign Affairs came. This is where we saw the ambassador, because he was there. We tried to call him back. They say, "No, no, we'll contact you". Nothing at all, we were not contacted. That's what also annoyed us because we were... we're learning information from left to right and all that. But why don't you want us to talk, to be together? There are questions we want to ask you too, but why do you always want to escape? There you go, that is why we were demonstrating. We went there to the embassy, we tabled the memo for the Prime Minister, and we even asked that the ambassador go out to receive the memo.

The ambassador did not want to. Well, that's not to say he didn't want to, we were told he was busy, he couldn't. We weren't asking for many minutes, eh, just to come. Finally, we are their children, out of respect anyway. There were parents and all that. Yes, he is the authority, it is true. But hey, out of kindness, we just asked for that, you don't want to receive us, but just to receive the thing. But in the end, he still asked if two people could go back there to talk. But we didn't talk, we didn't ask questions because we would want everyone to be there, to try to talk a little, not everyone, but the committee team with the ambassador, also the chief of mission, so as not to say that no, when you spoke, I was not there. One day we would like to meet together, try talking a bit, find out what is happening. Because sometimes we are told no, we are not informed in everything you are now saying, it's as if they're kind of trying to escape.

Saying no, it is you who's informing us, who is telling us. Even, I remember at the time, I think, there was the resolution in 2018, 2019, we went there, There is, I think, the consul and the chief of mission at the time, they had received us, they who say they were not aware of this, and yet it was circulating everywhere. We ask ourselves questions. What is happening? It's a shame, we don't know. This is what annoys us, this is what still revolts us. If we see that there is not really goodwill there, it is as if they're trying to pretend. So we decided, if this is the case, we will go to court. It's true, it's not easy, but hey, we'll try, eh, if we can't fix it. But we will not let the matter drop. We are here, we children and our grandchildren, well it will be terrible, it will continue, the struggle will continue. We're not going to give up, eh, we say it, it will still be mean compared to our parents.

It is us, we have lived, to see the suffering of our parents and we take care of our parents. How many years have we been taking care of our parents? Belgium had to do that. If it was in Belgium, it was Belgium that would take charge. Because these children, the parents did not

work. There are others who have worked, they are State officials. What do they get in return? Nothing at all, crumbs, crumbs. There is no pension, there is nothing at all. And we're still going to... we continue to take care of your children, do you think that's normal? We are already marked, you have abandoned us, abandoned us, our parents and we, we go on. But it's too much, it's too mean, that. It has to stop there, this case. Recognize us, recognize your children and us. And then there you go, we get closure, it's over.

Because otherwise, I now understand why there are... Ahh, you're going to apologize, we're not going to get to that, but when I see, there are others who are starting to rebel and make up stories from left to right. I'm not going to use those terms, and it's not... it's because of injustices, it's because of injustices! Why that? We don't deserve that? Because there were mixes with Black blood. Is that what you don't want? Blood is red, red. There's no Black, just because there's mixing of races and everything. You don't want to accept that, it's not, it's not normal. We must recognize and acknowledge that you have abandoned the children. Recognize that you have abandoned, and that you need to repair.

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Give us nationality, you will give us nationality, and so reparations must be made for our parents. Do it, it's not going to cost much, eh, it's not going to cost much! When we even filed the... they asked for the statistics. To date, we have left, we have filed some of the statistics that we have made with our own, very limited means. It's Belgium, you can say that we, there you go, we're giving you some resources, go to the provinces and everything. We did it with our own resources. We constituted it all the same, we did the census of, I think, 2300 members. That's only a part of it, because we keep on working. So I don't think we're going to get to even 15,000, 15,000, that's a lot, eh. Even if you regularize 5,000, what is it compared to Belgium? That's nothing! And the parents, I think they don't even get to 300. To this day, we have arrived at... the colonial children I think ninety, and their children and grandchildren, that is what gives a lot. And the others, the post-colonials, there is not much. But hey, as you are dragging your feet, we don't know, we'll see, eh, we'll see. But we will not let the matter drop. We're going to keep fighting, keep fighting until the drops of blood are repaired. The blood is screaming, "Repair," you have to repair.

[00:06:35]

SPEAKER 2: So you don't have any support from the Belgian state. Do you have other supporters of the Congolese state, for example?

SPEAKER 1: Well, so far, nothing at all.

SPEAKER 2: Can you repeat the question?

SPEAKER 1: Yes, we don't have support, From the Belgium side, it's true, we are moving forward. We have contacts, but on the DRC side, so far, nothing. I can say nothing. When there was the resolution, we wrote to the Senate, we wrote to Parliament, to the presidency, at the time,

there was still President Kabila. We never had any follow-up response. When there were also changes with President Tshisekedi, we wrote, we filed memos. So far, nothing at all. We thought that he could still do something, being also, I can say, a Belgian child. How can I say, a Belgian child, because he grew up in Belgium. It's..., I can say he grew up in Belgium and everything. He's a Belgian, he knows Belgium and everything, so it's his family, Belgium, it's his home!

In the contacts, this goes better with Belgium. We had said, in any case, this time, we think it will be all right, that he will do something for us. Mr. André Flahaut had asked us the question to find out. I said, we wrote, I even handed over the document to Mr. André Flahaut who said, "I'm going to present this to the president, I hope he's going to try to do something for you. We will contact you". Up to now, we have had no contact, nothing at all, nothing at all. We were not contacted and nothing happens. That's it, it is a bit shocking for us. Even when the Prime Minister spoke, the DRC could still react. When he apologized, the DRC could still react, say no, that's it, that's it. No, they don't support, nothing at all. It's as if we didn't exist, that's it.

[00:08:40]

SPEAKER 2: And are Congolese people in general aware of your history and your demands? Do they support you or not at all, or are they indifferent?

SPEAKER 1: It's not that they are..., they know. Yes, the Congolese people, I believe, there are, there are those who are aware because when we try to discuss with others, they say that no, you have the right. If I can give an example in the sense, when we go to ask the police for authorization to demonstrate, they say no, but you still have the right, you really have the right, and this is not the case. This is not good from Belgium. There are those who say well, they don't care, eh, it's not their problem, we're staying there and everything. But in the meantime, you are considered as foreigners anyway. You are considered, they say you are not our children. We experienced this when the King came, we demonstrated, we went, we arrived before the others. But, because the others I don't know which political party, I don't remember, they were placed. The military put them in front of the police, they said that, these are our children.

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We don't recognize you... and step back! We were driven away, we have to back away because we don't have the blood. It shocked us, it shocked us. It's really sad, it's sad. There you go. We are a bit like bats, that is to say there is no real identity. You go over there, we're rejecting you! No, you are not ours. Come on, from the other side, no, it's like bats, it's like bats.

SPEAKER 2: And how do you consider yourself, as being Congolese? Belgian? Black? African? Mixed Race?

SPEAKER 1: As they say, the blood is there. We have..., we consider ourselves... We are Mixed Race people, we are mixed. Because I can arrive some place, I say I am Congolese, I was told no, no, no, Congolese people are not like you. They will say no, some place, no, no, no. It looks like you are spotted. We're going to spot you one way or another. So, they know we have ... yes, we are Congolese, I am Congolese. I am also one part Belgian blood. And why only that I have to agree to remain Congolese from the moment when there is that blood too. I have to be recognized on both sides. Belgium must recognize me as her daughter and Congo too, that's how it is. Congo has done a lot for us, Congo has done a lot. You can say anything, Congo has done a lot with limited means. Our grandparents and all that, they accepted us. It gave us pondu(ph), we ate, and everything. Now Belgium can do something too, eh, it can do something too.

Congo has done a lot. Now nothing is being claimed from Congo. Belgium is being asked to recognize us because we are... we have Congolese nationality, we have that. We also want to have it from the other side, we want to have it from the other side. You know, here in Congo, it's true, we love our country. It's nice to live here, but there are conditions sometimes that, when it heats up, you're targeted. We don't want it, but it can happen. You are targeted with history, that we are also talking about the Tshiani law. That's also troubling in the Tshiani law, it's troublesome to us, we are targeted.

[00:12:35]

SPEAKER 2: Can you explain?

SPEAKER 1: Yes, the law where it says you must be from a father and mother who are 100% Congolese. So if you have some foreign blood and all that, you're not considered. When you're Black, Black, it's still fine. I can give an example. A Congolese man from Brazza, a Congolese man from Kinshasa, a Gabonese man, African man, it does not impact them. You can go out, we're not going to spot you. But we others, as soon as they see you, it's over, they know you're not, there you go, you could live there, while you were born, raised and everything. They know you are Congolese. As soon as you start to climb a little, this is where we will spot you, say no, you are not a Congolese woman or you are not a Congolese man, it's shocking, it is terrible. And there was according to the law, there, they say no, you can't apply for presidential positions and everything, everything, everything. So, we are still limited, and it is not going to be limited there.

Already, as we try to defend ourselves, we try to defend ourselves in relation to our times when we are together, we tell you no, no, no, it must pass. So, they support and it must pass because we, we do not recognize you. Stay where you are, go home! It's shocking to us! There, I can tell you, some time ago, here, there is one of our family members who was also a victim, where he lives, he lives in the neighborhood. There are people who threw garbage in front of his house. He can't complain because they say you, you don't have the right to complain here, it's not your country. It happens and he went to court to file a complaint. Even the magistrates said, "But

Papa, you're white". These are things like that. The Papa was shocked, he was... he's been hurt since childhood, he grew up in suffering, and it's going to go on like that.

But no, we still want to have peace somewhere. And our parents... besides, even if today we give nationality to our parents, me, my mother, she is no longer, she no longer has any strength there. And she had a stroke the day when, it was in October... Mr. André Flahaut, we demonstrated, two days after his departure, my mother had a stroke, she doesn't speak anymore and she lost her language.

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But she's--the day we demonstrated at the embassy again a few days ago, she was there. She said, "I'll go all the way". We said, "Mom, stay here," she said, "No, no, you're going to see the images." She was there, she even held the placard(ph). There's stuff we put on it, "tomb," "No to the law," I believe... tomb law, I think... I'm going to check.

No to the politics of the tomb, that's it. No to the politics of the tomb. What are the politics of the tomb? You're waiting for all these Mixed Race people to die. They were born during independence. Just until they are no longer there, after it is over, it's closed off. Well, there you go, as they are not there, well, it's over. This is the politics of the tomb. But we don't want that. But you, even if you do it, we are here. We are here. We will follow you to the end. We will follow you, really. We'll shout, keep screaming, and scream... scream until you repair(ph).

SPEAKER 2: Thank you. I don't have any more questions.

[00:16:10]

SPEAKER 4: On a completely legal point, when you talk about reparation, would this be just to recognize your Belgian nationality. On a legal point, here, it is not about the Tshiani law, the constitution of the DRC says that Congolese nationality is one and exclusive. Now, how are you going to balance that with the fact that you already have Congolese nationality? And once Belgium, if Belgium today decides to grant you Belgian nationality, automatically you will lose Congolese nationality, that is the law. So what do you think, how do you think about the issue? Apart from the fact that for Belgium to recognize your right to nationality, you would also like the DRC to be able to amend some of its laws accordingly? How? What reading do you make of this?

SPEAKER 1: Yes, in relation to that... When you say that Congolese nationality is exclusive, right?

SPEAKER 4: It is one and exclusive.

SPEAKER 1: One and exclusive... Yes, we thought about that. So, we know that if you have Congolese nationality, you cannot have dual nationality. But, I think, a few years ago, at the level of Parliament, they tried to see... I think they were wanting to try a bit to see how to handle dual nationalities, or facilities, I think in that sense. But, it's going to depend on a person, maybe to receive, say that... There are others who may not want to take it, and there they will say that no,

It's just for my children. There are others, when we try to discuss with others who say that no, I'm only going for my children, for the studies and all that, to facilitate. It is in this sense there, to obtain Belgian nationality.

And we're going, yes, if we can already have that, it will be a good thing. I know our parents here will help us. I think our president is going to do something. He will not abandon us in this sense. I think Parliament, the Senate, they will try to look at exceptional laws as well. We will ask on both sides. If we get to the other side, maybe here they will help us some way or another. Maybe look at... maybe permanent settlement visas, things like that, because that allows you to stay. Even if you don't want to go live in Belgium, you can stay here and you have Belgian nationality, but you stay, you can work or not have a job, you can stay. But, being on both sides, well I think they're going to help us in that sense, yeah.

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SPEAKER 2: Ok, thank you. Do you still have something to add? Something you really would like to express before we finish?

SPEAKER 1: I am defending, I'm asking a lot in relation to the level of the archives, if we can be helped otherwise. Because, if they're going to say no, we only have to find traces. I heard that, I don't know if it is true, that even if to obtain the visa in the meantime, you must first have the parentage things, the parentage, there it's complicated! People who have abandoned you, there are others who even try to find the traces. But the family who are out there, they don't want to hear about it. We have cases that no, no, no, you call... There is one of our committee members, he found traces. He called the aunt, the aunt said, "I don't even want you to mention that name."

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"You can't carry that name, and let it be the last time". What bothered me, they believe that we, we're going there only to obtain property. No, that's not it. Maybe these people won't even see us. But we have problems, it is with the Belgian government. If one day, if there may be people who are good, who can tell those families that can contact us and say no, it's blood, it's family... Ok, it's fine, we can go get acquainted, go, but if they don't want to, we won't force things, we are not going to force things, we'll stay in our corner, get on with our life. But, what Belgium is trying to do, to make it easier for us, because there are testimonies, there are witnesses here. We can even send witnesses to villages where we know, we know that this is a child of a Portuguese man, a Greek or a Belgian. As we know, there are witnesses. So, maybe in that sense, if they doubt... we're even ready because DNA testing here is very expensive.

But if they want, we can even proceed with this, we agree on who is who, but at the expense of Belgium, it is themselves who will take charge of this. Maybe it's going far, but if they really had, if they have a good heart, they can ask for testimonies. We are here, because we don't want to mix things up. We are only talking about the children of Belgians here in Congo. We can go down, go from left to right as we did with the censuses, the ones we just did there. We worked in the interior, part of the interior, here, to get what we had as a census. Not only does it take good will, we are here and we're continuing to work. The work they could do, we do it, we do it because it was Belgium that should have done the census. But we did. They didn't even ask how we did that. We tried to do it anyway, we filed the list at the embassy, that's it.

SPEAKER 2: Ok. A very big thank you Mama.

SPEAKER 1: Ok, thank you very much. Thank you. And we hope that the message will get passed on and they will have a heart, not a heart of stone, but a heart of flesh to try to repair. Thank you.

SPEAKER 3: We'll cut.

[end, 22:30]