

## Elections in DR Congo: December 20, 2023: Cautions by ICG

October 31, 2023

Democratic Republic of the Congo: The next general elections are scheduled on **December 20, 2023**. The **Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI)** will hold elections for the President, the 500 members of the National Assembly, the elected members of the 26 provincial assemblies, and, **for the first time under the new constitution**, members of around 300 commune (municipal) councils.



As of October 23, 2023, there are 24 provisional candidates who have registered for the presidential elections. The candidates need to be **approved by the Constitutional Court**, with a **final list due to be published on November 18**. Besides the incumbent President, **Félix Tshisekedi**, among those that have registered as candidates are:

- Tony Bolamba
- Jean-Claude Baende
- Martin Fayulu, leader of the Engagement for Citizenship and Development
- Marie-Josée Ifoku
- Moïse Katumbi, leader of the Together for the Republic
- Seth Kikuni
- Denis Mukwege, winner of the 2018 Nobel Peace Prize

Although the previous elections in 2018 resulted in a peaceful transfer of power and the inauguration of President **Félix Tshisekedi**, the recent report by the

**International Crisis Group (ICG)**, released on October 30, highlights worsening security conditions in certain regions of the country and the **failure of the mineral boom to bring about improvements in people's lives**. Nonetheless, Tshisekedi has strengthened his position by including influential political figures in his coalition.

The ICG cautions that if the election is poorly conducted and accompanied by violence that prevents many citizens from voting, it could impede the DRC's advancement towards a more democratic future and economic stability.

The ongoing conflict between government forces and insurgents in **North Kivu**, along with general insecurity in other areas, present additional risks to the electoral process.

Other concerns highlighted in the report include **the imposition of martial law in two eastern provinces**, the suppression of protests, and the potential for security forces to engage in abuses during election campaigns. The ICG also warns of potential clashes between supporters of different political parties, heightened attacks by armed groups, and violent disputes that may arise at polling stations.

The report calls on the international community to play a role in urging both the government and opposition to seek compromises on contentious matters. Additionally, they should be prepared to mediate in the event of contested election results. Specifically, influential African powers in Kinshasa and Western actors are singled out as key actors who can contribute to this process.

By --- **Abel in Burundi**

**Note:** Please read “DR Congo: A Nobel Prize winner to run for Presidency” dated October 6, 2023 at <https://diginews360.com/dr-congo-a-nobel-prize-winner-to-run-for-presidency/> .