

Guterres urges Congolese security forces to exercise restraint amid reports six people killed in protests

22 January 2018 – Amid disturbing reports that at least six people were killed on Sunday during political protests in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) United Nations [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres has urged Congolese security forces to respect the people's right to free speech and freedom of assembly.

“The Secretary-General urges the Congolese security forces to exercise restraint,” said a [statement](#) issued this afternoon by UN Spokesman Stéphane Dujarric, in the wake of reports which suggest that along with the fatalities, that 63 people were injured during the protests, which are calling for implementation of the 31 December 2016 political agreement.

Mr. Guterres called on the Congolese authorities to conduct credible investigations into these incidents and to hold those responsible accountable.

Similar demonstrations three weeks ago led to a number of deaths. The protests have been taking place in the vicinity of churches in and in the regard, the UN chief today, ‘called upon all concerned to ensure full respect for places of worship.’”

The agreement at the heart of the protests — facilitated by *Conférence Episcopale Nationale du Congo* (CENCO) mediators – allowed President Joseph Kabila to stay in power beyond the end of his term and stipulated that peaceful, credible and inclusive elections would be organized in the DRC by the end of December 2017.

The polls were reportedly pushed back to December 2018, sparking violent protests late last month.

“The Secretary-General, once again, calls on Congolese political actors to work towards the full implementation of the 31 December political agreement, which remains the only viable path to the holding of elections, the peaceful transfer of power and the consolidation of stability in the [country],” the statement concluded.