

# In DR Congo, UN Security Council says December polls are 'historic opportunity' for country

The [United Nations Security Council](#) wrapped up on Saturday a two-day mission to the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), where the body's 15 members pledged to support the process in the run-up to long-delayed elections, set for late December, and called for the polls to be credible and peaceful.

"The Security Council must put all its weight [behind] our priority objective: elections by 23 December, which are credible, transparent, and held in a calm climate," François Delattre, the Permanent Representative of France to the UN and leader of the Council mission, said on Friday evening during a press briefing in Kinshasa, the Congolese capital.

The DRC is scheduled to hold long-delayed elections on December 23, 2018. President Joseph Kabila has declared he will not stand for the polls, in line with the country's Constitution.

On Saturday, the Security Council delegation had a "significant and in-depth" meeting with President Kabila, which Ambassador Delattre described as the "high point of the Council's mission in Kinshasa."

"We have signaled the Council's willingness to accompany the DRC on the road to peace, stability and prosperity," Mr. Delattre stated, adding: "The 23 December election mark a historic opportunity on this path. They are paving the way for the country's first democratic and peaceful transition."

Arriving in Kinshasa Friday afternoon, the Security Council delegation held a two-hour "working session" discussing the progress and challenges of the electoral process with the office of the Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI).

The President of the CENI, Corneille Nangaa, thanked the Council for the considerable support of the UN to the elections process. "Today we have more than 130 international [MONUSCO](#) experts who are our advisers," Nangaa told reporters, referring to acronym for the UN stabilization mission in the country.

He also made clear that the DRC Government had decided "not to solicit other financial and logistical support from partners".

Mr. Nangaa went on to stress the need to reconcile a critical double imperative: the credibility of polls and their holding on 23 December.

The Security Council also met on Saturday with the National Episcopal Conference of the Congo (CENCO), which facilitated the signing by the Government and the opposition of the so-called 'New Year's Eve agreement' on

December 31, 2016, by which elections were to be held before the end of 2017. After a postponement, [marked by violent protests](#), the polls were finally announced for late December 2018.

For CENCO, the meeting with the Council delegation was an opportunity to express “the fears, difficulties and worries” related to the electoral process, but also to emphasize that “the process is moving forward”.

“CENCO has been inviting political and social actors to seek consensus around the problems that divide them,” Fr André Masinganda, the First Deputy Secretary-General of CENCO, told *Radio Okapi*, citing, among others, problems related to the electoral register and the voting machine.