

Speech: Ensuring a peaceful and democratic transition of power in DRC

I will now make a statement in my national capacity. SRSB, I too would like to thank you and Monseigneur Utembi and Ms Furaha for those really helpful briefings. I think the whole Council has benefited from being able to hear from you and thank you too for all the work that MONUSCO does to try and bring peace and stability to the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

I just wanted to say that I think at this crucial time, it's important that the Security Council receives information from key players and we are therefore, like others, disappointed that the DRC electoral commission CENI weren't able to join this briefing.

We very much share the concern about women's participation that in particular Bolivia and Equatorial Guinea set out so clearly after Ms. Furaha's briefing. We've noted the continuing progress on the electoral calendar and the closure of the application process for presidential candidates and the confirmation that President Kabila will not run for a third term. As others have said, this is a critical step forward and it will help ensure that credible and inclusive elections in December lead to DRC's first ever democratic and peaceful transition of power. This is an immense prize, but it is still a vulnerable one.

Ambassador Haley set out forcibly how we are still four months from elections and there is a long way to go. This is about more than the timeline; it's about creating the conditions for free and fair elections. And we join others in calling on the government to implement the Saint Sylvestre Agreement in full, and that includes the confidence-building measures to demonstrate their credibility and potential for government.

We also look to the opposition we engage constructively. The electoral process should be transparent and it should proactively address the concerns of Congolese Civil Society. I'd like to make three points on that:

Firstly, we call on CENI to clarify election protocols to enable effective observation and to address concerns around the electoral register and the voting machines and many representatives they have set out those difficulties in full and we endorse their concerns.

Secondly, we note that CENI has refused MONUSCO logistical assistance to organise the elections, and we therefore urge CENI to clarify its logistical plan, or to accept MONUSCO's assistance urgently.

And thirdly, a vital element in building trust in the elections is inclusivity. We note with concern the lack of confidence of several opposition parties in the electoral process following the release of the provisional list of presidential candidates. Elections need to be fully inclusive and they need to see the engagement of all the Congolese people.

It is clear DRC faces many challenges and these have had a devastating effect upon the population. A number of speakers today referred to the violations of human rights across the country. The link between political uncertainty and instability and the other drivers of violence which the ongoing Ebola crisis risks exacerbating. And we would share those concerns and hope they can be addressed. I called again for the Saint Sylvestre Agreement to be implemented fully. Delays in elections and lack of public trust only risk further violence. This will have an effect not just on the DRC, but risks destabilising a wider region too.