

United Nations Security Council  
Arria Formula Meeting

**The Electoral Process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo**

*Monday, February 12, 2018*  
*10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.*  
*Conference Room 2*

Organized by the United States, Côte d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, France,  
the Netherlands, Sweden, and the United Kingdom

**CONCEPT NOTE**

*Background:*

Under the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) constitution, presidential, legislative and provincial elections should have taken place in 2016. In light of delays, the DRC government and opposition parties signed the Saint-Sylvestre Agreement in December 2016 (“31 December 2016 Agreement”) that called for a peaceful, democratic transition of power before the end of December 2017 and re-affirmed that President Joseph Kabila could not seek a third term or change the Constitution. The DRC Government and the Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI), however, were unable to organize elections in accordance with the 2017 deadline. On November 5, 2017, the CENI announced the publication of a new electoral calendar, including technical benchmarks, for combined presidential, legislative and provincial elections, which will take place on December 23, 2018.

In Presidential Statement 12 of 2017, the UN Security Council emphasized the critical importance of ensuring elections are not further postponed. Security Council members underscored the need to do everything possible to ensure that DRC authorities organize the elections with the requisite conditions of transparency, credibility and inclusivity, and noted that a peaceful and credible electoral cycle is crucial for lasting peace and stability in the DRC. The Council also called for full implementation of confidence building measures, some of which are yet to be implemented, including immediate progress on the release of political prisoners, the end of “unjustified lawsuits,” and respect for human rights. In addition to the confidence building measures articulated by the 31 December 2016 Agreement, DRC must meet numerous technical benchmarks in order to hold elections in December 2018.

*Objective:*

Security Council members have expressed support for strengthening cooperation and coordination between the Security Council and regional organizations. In the interest of continued coordination and joint monitoring of progress toward elections, this meeting provides an opportunity for the Secretariat, African regional leaders, and the

international community to discuss ways to enhance support for the DRC government and to ensure that elections are held in a timely, peaceful, and credible manner in December 2018. During this meeting, participants will discuss the Elections Roadmap below and consider the necessary conditions for free, fair, and inclusive elections in the DRC, such as:

- the necessary conditions for ensuring political space, including freedom of assembly, and the credibility of elections, including remaining aspects of the 31 December 2016 Agreement;
- the use of electronic voting, including risks associated with untested machines; and
- the importance of the electoral timeline as set out by the DRC/CENI, in particular the important deadlines set forth in the Elections Roadmap.

*Elections Roadmap:*

<u>APRIL 5, 2018:</u>	Completion of the Cleaning of the Voter Register List
<u>MAY 25, 2018:</u>	Completion of Audit of the Voter Registry
<u>MAY 2018:</u>	Promulgation of the Law for the Distribution of Seats
<u>JUNE 2018:</u>	Convocation of the Electoral Process
<u>JULY 2018:</u>	Opening of Registration of Presidential Candidates Registration of Diaspora
<u>AUGUST 8, 2018:</u>	End of the Registration Presidential Candidates
<u>SEPTEMBER 2018:</u>	Publication of the Final List of Candidates
<u>DECEMBER 23 2018:</u>	Credible Elections Take Place
<u>JANUARY 12, 2019:</u>	Swearing-in of the New President

*Panelists:*

- Mr. Jean Pierre Lacroix, United Nations, Undersecretary General for Peacekeeping Operations
- Mr. Corneille Nangaa, President of the Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI)
- Ms. Ida Sawyer, Human Rights Watch, Central African Director
- Mr. Rushdi Nackerdien, International Foundation for Electoral Systems, Regional Director, Africa

*Speaking Participants:*

- UN Security Council Member States
- Democratic Republic of the Congo
- African Union Representative

- Southern African Development Community (SADC) Representative
- International Conference of the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) Representatives
- European Union Representative

*Format:*

Following introductory remarks by Ambassador Haley, the panelists will make presentations. Then, the Security Council members and speaking participants named above will be invited to take the floor to speak for five minutes each.

Panelists will present and participants should discuss:

- the timeline of the upcoming DRC elections;
- the necessary conditions for free, fair, and credible elections;
- how the United Nations, particularly MONUSCO, can assist in elections;
- accountability measures to ensure parties abide by commitments made in the 31 December 2016 Agreement; and
- how to ensure close coordination between international and regional partners throughout the coming year.

The organizers invite all member states, as well as permanent observers and non-governmental organizations, to attend. Interpretation will be in all official languages of the United Nations. The Arria will be open to the press and livestream will be available.

