

Human rights violations during DRC general elections – UN report Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
20 March 2012

A UN report released Tuesday details serious human rights violations, including killings, disappearances and arbitrary detention, committed in Kinshasa by Congolese security forces in the context of the 2011 presidential and legislative elections in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). The report, based on investigations conducted by the UN Joint Human Rights Office in the DRC, documents the killing of at least 33 people in Kinshasa by security forces, between 26 November and 25 December 2011. The investigation found that at least 83 were wounded – mostly by bullets – and at least 16 people remain unaccounted for. More than 265 people were arrested and the majority of them were arbitrarily detained in various detention facilities in Kinshasa. There was also consistent, corroborated testimony of torture in detention.

Most of the reported violations involved Republican Guards, National Congolese Police – in particular agents of the Légion nationale d'intervention and agents of the Groupe mobile d'intervention – or the national intelligence agency. (...)

(...) Many of the reported violations targeted people because of their real or perceived affiliation to the political opposition party of Etienne Tshisekedi, the main opponent of President Joseph Kabila in the presidential elections or to a province where he reportedly enjoyed strong support.

Despite initial difficulties faced by the team during its investigation in accessing detention places, victims and witnesses, the UN Joint Human Rights Office noted the engagement of the government to address the reported violations, after having reviewed and commented on the report.

The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Head of MONUSC, Roger Meece strongly condemned the serious human rights violations described in the report and other acts of violence committed throughout the country during the electoral period.

A judicial investigation was opened earlier in December. (...)

(...) In compiling the report, the UN investigators gathered around 110 statements from various sources, including victims, witnesses, Congolese authorities and representatives of political parties. They also visited several places of detention, hospitals, clinics and health centres, as well as analysing information received through a free hotline set up by the UN Joint Human Rights Office.

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