

# Tensions in the DRC: MONUSCO must act before having to react

- [english] - Region - Africa - Democratic Republic of Congo -

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## **Description :**

As the results of the presidential election are expected to be announced today by the Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI), our organizations call on the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) to fully carry out its mandate to protect the civilian population and prevent serious violations of human rights in the DRC.

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Continued violence between supporters of different political parties, and between supporters of opposition parties and government security forces in Kinshasa and other cities have exacerbated the tension felt in the country since the beginning of the presidential campaign. In light of the irregularities that have marred the electoral process, it is likely that this tension will not subside when the results are announced.

Therefore, in the interest of prevention, our organizations call on MONUSCO to act according to its mandate - as outlined in resolution 1991 (2011) adopted by the United Nations Security Council - to protect civilians, including human rights defenders, under threat of violence.

### **Our organizations call on MONUSCO to:**

- watch for and report violations of human rights in the context of the elections;
- encourage and assist the relevant authorities in quickly bringing to justice the authors and perpetrators of serious human rights violations committed during the electoral process, in accordance with the principles of due process;
- conduct joint patrols with the Congolese National Police and Armed Forces of the DRC, particularly in areas of public assembly, to avoid excessive use of force or illegal repression by the Congolese security forces;
- assist the Congolese authorities in dealing with public demonstrations in a manner consistent with international laws and human rights standards;
- secure public spaces and buildings at risk of violence, including the residences of senior political figures;
- call on the Congolese government to prohibit the official media from inciting hatred and violence, or denigrating and defaming presidential candidates, journalists, civil society organizations and human rights defenders;
- establish early warning and protection mechanisms for human rights defenders and independent journalists, using secure lines of communication and evacuation procedures to areas under the supervision and protection of the United Nations and certain embassies;
- facilitate discussion and encourage non-violence through meetings with representatives of political parties and members of civil society.

***"MONUSCO has a critical role to play in calming tensions around the presidential election. Its actions must be impartial, immediate and effective, or else it risks having to hastily react to a future outbreak of violence,"*** said Dismas Kitege, Vice-President of the FIDH and President of Lotus Group.