



Organiser l'action civile pour transformer le champ politique en R.D. Congo

Kinshasa, August 8, 2022

Letter to His Excellency Mr. Anthony Blinken
Secretary of State of the United States of America.

On the occasion of his visit to the D.R. Congo.

His Excellency Mr. Secretary of State;

1. We, members of the Congolese civil society, would like to thank you very much for your visit in our country, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), and mostly for your commitment to engage with its civil society to discuss ongoing important questions at stake regarding the forthcoming general elections in 2023.

His Excellency Mr. Secretary of State;

2. As a general concern, we are much worried that the actual quest from the western countries to counter the expansion of Russia and China's strategic and political influence would sacrifice our right as people of the DRC to live under and fight for a democratic state and a good government. Nearby history offers strong evidence of support of the western countries to the reign of the dictatorship of Mobutu over three decades during the cold war to keep him as ally. Today, there are enough indication that this trend might be at play.
3. Indeed, from 2016 to 2018, the people of the DRC had strongly appreciated in large number the support of the international community to his fight against the Kabila regime to get the organization of the presidential and legislative elections that had been postponed for two years. Even though many credible reports have attested that the published result that saw Mr. Felix Tshisekedi elected president was the outcome of a deal between the latter and Kabila, while the real winner was Mr. Martin Fayulu, the acceptance of this fraudulent result was built on the

hope that Mr. Tshisekedi being a democracy fighter for long time, he would advance democratic and governance reforms.

Later in 2019 and 2020, the people of the DRC had again strongly appreciated in large number the support of the international community, and mainly of the government of the United States of America, to the proclaimed President Tshisekedi over his predecessor Kabila that ended up by him controlling full executive power and the majority in both congress and senate. We, the people of Congo, were happy that President Tshisekedi had full capabilities to implement reforms that reinforce good governance and democracy, which are precondition to the success of socio-economic programs and the improvement of everyday life.

Moreover, given the strong support that President Tshisekedi has benefited from the international community members in order to take power over his predecessor Kabila; they must have gained in return strong influence on his regime. Hence, the Congolese people was rightly expecting the international community to use it to trigger good governance and advance in democratic reforms from the Tshisekedi regime.

However, not much time has passed before President Tshisekedi regime started reproducing the same bad governance practices and violation of democratic principles that prevailed under Kabila regime. Looking back at 2021 and 2022, the situation is even worse with respect to the functioning of the parliament in furthering democracy and controlling the executive branch, the fairness of the ongoing electoral process, the political and civil rights of citizens, the impunity regarding corruption and embezzlement actors, the nepotism and tribalism in accessing public duties, ...

Facts attesting the worsening of the situation with respect to all these aspects under the President Tshisekedi regime abound, and there is no way the members of the international community can claim ignoring them. Instead, there has been total silence from the latter regarding such developments in President Tshisekedi's governance. Many times, some ambassadors had tendency to inflate praises of good governance (such as on the matter of fighting corruption), in total contradiction with ongoing realities as well as the claims from the Congolese population. Successive high ranked visitors in Kinshasa from western countries result as well in regime credibility reinforcement abroad, while there is growing lost of legitimacy within the country.

Such attitude of the members of the international community of being complacent with some allied regimes in the developing countries regarding the way they govern their people is what made dictatorship to develop and last during the cold war.

We, members of the Congolese civil society, would like to draw your attention and that of main western governments to not reproduce the same mistakes in present days in the process of countering China and Russia influence expansion.

His Excellency Mr. Secretary of State,

4. Coming to ways of improving the credibility and the outcomes of the 2023 general elections, it is important for the international community members, and particularly the government of the United States of America, to acknowledge that many steps have already been passed by the regime of President Tshisekedi in order to compromise the integrity of the election process, and guarantee his regime the possibility of manipulating the outcomes. Four of these steps worth reminding:
 - a. Changes of judges of the Constitutional Courts made by the President twice since his arrival in power in violation of laws guarantee him total control of the courts.
 - b. The CENI's (National and Independent Election Commission) board of direction and assembly are made of people whose designation was strongly dictated by the President circle, and key functions are assumed by people from the tribe of the President.
 - c. The electoral law has been revised and passed lately by the President majority in the parliament through non-democratic process and after rejecting all propositions from the opposition, but also from some members of his majority, that were likely to improve the election openness and confidence.
 - d. The introduction in the electoral law of the possibility of electronic vote, which decision the time coming is totally on the discretion of the CENI. If chosen, the electronic vote will make it impossible to track the results from voting offices and centers which will no longer have capabilities to compile local votes. In 2018 election, the use of voting machines (semi-electronic vote) gave possibility to local voting offices and centers to post transcripts of the results on their walls directly after voting compilation. This had allowed the delegates of the Catholic church to aggregate the results for the presidential election, which had been crucial in detecting how far the result published by the CENI didn't reflect the reality, even before the unpublished real result detained by the CENI was leaked.
5. Hence, taking into account these passed steps as well as the aggressive and non-consensual attitude of President Tshisekedi regime regarding the forthcoming

elections, the international community members should reactivate the same strategies they implemented from 2016 to 2018 against the Kabila regime. In this perspective, the following measures would be relevant:

- a. From now on, put the election process in the DRC under strong surveillance.
- b. Identify key people within the President Tshisekedi office, the government, the parliament, the CENI and the security services who are compromising fair election process as well as political and civil rights of citizen.
- c. Define comprehensive sanctions to apply to the key people listed, and apply them whenever required.
- d. Strongly support the demands from the opposition and the civil society that aim to foster great openness, confidence, credibility and trackability throughout the election process.
- e. Provide adequate financial and technical support to the CENI.
- f. Provide adequate financial and technical support to the civil society as watchdog of the election process and trackability of the results.

His Excellency Mr. Secretary of State;

6. We, members of the Congolese civil society, have spoken on behalf of the people of the DRC held hostage by his political elite motivated merely by the conservation of power for personal enrichment, and we expect that the information provided in this letter will help redefining the policy and attitude of the government of the United States of America in particular, and of other members of the international community in general, toward the actual government of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

For the coordination of the civil society
« D.R. Congo – 2023 Elections Program »

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