

# Democratic Republic of Congo 2023 Election set to chart the next five-years in domestic politics

KINSHASA, KINSHASA, DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO, December 8, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- In a little under two week's time on December 20th, 2023 the citizens of Africa's fourth most populous nation, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) head to the polls to elect their next President and Administration.

With a population over 110 million[1] and incredible economic potential, the DRC is widely considered one of the world's richest countries in natural resources; its untapped deposits of raw minerals are estimated to be worth in excess of US\$24 trillion [2] The DRC has 70% of the world's coltan, a third of its cobalt, more than 30% of its diamond reserves, and a tenth of its copper.



Democratic Republic of Congo (source: istock.com)

The election offers the country the opportunity for the administration of President Félix Tshisekedi and his Party, the Union for Democracy and Social Progress (UDSP) to secure a second, five-year term and continue their efforts to improve Africa's fourth most populous country.

As recently reported by English language newspaper, The Guardian the election field is wide – currently composing some 24 candidates including Denis Mukwege, a Nobel peace prize-winning gynaecologist; Floribert Anzuluni, a banker turned activist; Aggrey Ngalasi, a pastor; Moïse Katumbi, who was barred from the country to prevent him from standing in the 2018 elections; and Martin Fayulu, a former oil executive [3]

The election process itself, whilst culminating in the Presidential swearing in ceremony on January 20th, 2024 started with voter registration twelve months earlier. Given the size of the country which is equivalent to the whole of Western Europe and infrastructure, a task as simple as voter registration takes on a huge challenge.

Candidate registration occurred between late June and early October 2023. Candidates are required to meet several criteria to ensure that their candidacy is legal and legitimate. These criteria are enshrined in the DRC's legal code - Law No. 061006 on the organisation of presidential and legislative elections, provincial, urban, municipal and local (2006) [4]

One of the provisions of the law – “No one is eligible if he or she does not meet the conditions Following: 1. be of Congolese nationality” is proving to be challenging for one of the candidates, Moïse Katumbi, who was unable to participate in the prior 2018 elections. The Lusaka Times newspaper uncovered the story that Mr. Katumbi holds a diplomatic passport from Zambia [5]

Further research uncovered the United States Department of Homeland Security's website is open to the public and which records movements of i-94 visa holders has Mr. Katumbi country of citizenship as being Zambia – which could, in theory place him in breach of the electoral laws [6]

During the past few days of electoral campaigning (supporting votes for candidate number 20, Felix Tshisekedi), Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Defense has repeatedly asked Moïse Katumbi to tell the truth to the Congolese population about his Zambian citizenship, and there is little doubt that he seems to be focusing on this issue until the end of the electoral campaign.

As the election draws near one of the great achievements of President Félix Tshisekedi's administration has been to successfully organize and mobilize the country to hold to its commitments and election timetable.

[1] <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/congo-democratic-republic-of-the/>

[2] [http://www.thefreelibrary.com/DR+Congo's+\\$24+trillion+fortune.-a0193800184](http://www.thefreelibrary.com/DR+Congo's+$24+trillion+fortune.-a0193800184)

[3] <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/dec/04/opposition-candidates-jostle-for-position-before-drc-election> also see <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/twenty-four-candidates-sign-up-congolese-presidential-race-december-2023-10-08/>

[4] See Journal Officiel de la République Démocratique du Congo No. 58, 30th December, 2017. pp.2-8.

[5] <https://www.lusakatimes.com/2018/08/30/ndc-urged-government-to-come-clean-on-katumbis-alleged-zambian-passport/>

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