



## PRESS RELEASE

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### ***Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission Members Call for Free and Fair Elections in the Democratic Republic of Congo***

#### ***Members Urge All Parties to Renounce Violence***

Washington – Today, Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission Co-Chairmen Jim McGovern, Frank Wolf, and Commission Member Donald Payne, Ranking Member of the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, and Human Rights, issued the following statement:

“We call on the Democratic Republic of the Congo’s (DRC) government and political parties to ensure that the November 28<sup>th</sup> elections will be transparent, credible, and peaceful. Free and fair elections are a necessary and key milestone to ensure lasting democracy and stability.

“Recent reports of pre-election violence and intimidation are deeply disturbing. We urge the DRC government to ensure the respect for the freedoms of expression and peaceful assembly and to take the necessary steps to allow all political parties to campaign without fear or favor. In addition, given the delays in distributing electoral material, we ask that every effort be made to ensure that voting materials are delivered in a safe and timely manner.

“We recognize the efforts of the electoral commission, Congolese parliament, electoral authorities and political parties in preparation for the election. Should logistical challenges warrant a delay of a few days, we call on the election commission to consult, in a transparent manner, with political parties and civil society groups to find a mutually agreed upon new date.”

Congressman McGovern stated, “I urge all parties to adhere to the mutually respectful and constructive dialogue. Inflammatory rhetoric, intimidation, and violence are unacceptable. After so many years of suffering, the Congolese people deserve so much better.”

Congressman Wolf declared, “Free, fair, and credible elections that are not marred by violence or intimidation are essential to ensure that the voices and will of the Congolese people are heard.

The outcome of these elections will have a great impact on not only the DRC but the Great Lakes region as a whole.”

Congressman Payne added, “There is no place in the democratic process for violence, intimidation, and coercion. I urge all political parties to ensure the integrity of the electoral process and to respect the democratic aspirations of the Congolese people.”

The mission of the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission is to promote and advocate human rights in a nonpartisan manner both inside and outside of Congress.

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