

JAMES P. MCGOVERN, Massachusetts
Co-Chair



RANDY HULTGREN, Illinois
Co-Chair

One Hundred and Fifteenth Congress
Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission

December 17, 2018

His Excellency President Joseph Kabila
c/o Embassy of the Democratic Republic of the Congo
1720 16th Street NW
Washington, DC 20009

Dear President Kabila,

As Co-Chairs of the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission, an official bipartisan body of the U.S. House of Representatives, we write regarding the national elections scheduled for December 23, 2018 and their aftermath.

The Commission recently held an official briefing in which panelists shared a number of concerns about the preparations for the elections, including reports of problematic voter rolls; logistical, training and security problems involving the newly-imported and untested electronic voting machines; the refusal by your government and the Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI) of international offers of assistance; your government's decision to block certain international election observers; and enduring restrictions on freedom of expression and assembly. Just last week, police reportedly fired live ammunition against opposition supporters during a campaign rally in Lubumbashi, killing at least three people, according to the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights. Conditions that would ensure that the elections meet widely accepted international standards thus do not appear to be in place. As a consequence, the results may be considered illegitimate, including by many Congolese.

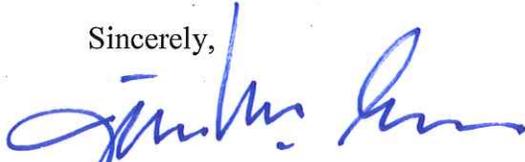
As the leader of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, it is incumbent on you to fulfill the long-deferred constitutional mandate for a democratic transition of power and uphold the fundamental rights of the citizens of your country. It is not too late to do so. We especially encourage you to ensure that the Congolese people are able to participate freely and fully in the electoral process and to peacefully express their reactions to the results, including through legal recourse as well as public protests and other forms of nonviolent expression and assembly.

As you are likely aware, this past November 27 the House of Representatives passed the *Democratic Republic of the Congo Democracy and Accountability Act of 2018* with an overwhelming majority. The Act clearly expresses the long-standing bipartisan congressional

support for democracy and human rights in the DRC, and for combatting corruption. It also demonstrates Congress' interest in deterring abuses through targeted sanctions and other measures.

As you know, we believe that political pluralism and respect for individual freedoms are the conditions most likely to lead to enduring stability and prosperity. We sincerely hope that the results of the upcoming elections will provide the opportunity to work together towards these goals with the new DRC government in the new year.

Sincerely,



James P. McGovern
Member of Congress
Co-Chair, TLHRC



Randy Hultgren
Member of Congress
Co-Chair, TLHRC