



The Rt. Hon. Justin Trudeau
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6

June 28, 2016

Dear Prime Minister Trudeau,

We are writing to alert you to the current critical situation in Democratic Republic of Congo and to urge that the Government of Canada promote democracy and good governance by exerting diplomatic pressure on the Congolese government to adhere to and respect its national constitution, and the universally recognized democratic values and principles therein enshrined.

D.R. Congo is one of Canada's longstanding Francophonie partners. The Congolese people are committed to democracy, the rule of law and their national constitution. According to that constitution, national elections to elect a new president and national assembly must be held in November 2016. However, we are deeply concerned that the current government's plan to delay the elections until 2018 sharply increases the risk of election-related violence and political instability.

As civil society organizations committed to human rights, peace and democracy in D.R. Congo and the Great Lakes Region of Africa, we strongly urge the Government of Canada to work in solidarity with the people of D.R. Congo to:

- Increase diplomatic pressure on the Congolese government to respect its constitution and hold national elections within the constitutionally determined timeframe;
- Mobilize Canadian resources in 2016 for international election observation in the D.R. Congo; and
- Support Congolese civil society organizations to promote civic engagement, conduct trainings on the electoral process for electors and potential candidates, and engage in election observation.

The urgency of the situation requires that Canada act immediately to call for adherence to the Congolese constitution and full implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 2277 (March 30, 2016) on peace and security in D.R. Congo. Canada would be adding its voice to those of the United Nations, the African Union, the European Union, the International Organization of the Francophonie and the United States. Canada has a particularly

important role to play given the significant natural resource wealth that has been extracted by Canadian mining companies from the D.R. Congo in recent years.

We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you, or a member of your Cabinet, to discuss this urgent situation which threatens to trigger and increase violence and regional instability if not properly addressed. To reach out to our organizations, we invite you to contact Ian Thomson, Africa Partnerships Coordinator at KAIROS, ithomson@kairoscanada.org, 613-235-9956 ext. 222.

Yours sincerely,

Canadians for Human Rights in Congo

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KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives

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Cc: The Hon. Rona Ambrose, Conservative Party Leader
The Hon. Thomas Mulcair, New Democratic Party Leader
Rhéal Fortin, Bloc Québécois Leader
Elizabeth May, Green Party Leader
All Members of Parliament and Senators