

INTERIM REPORT
THE CARTER CENTER INTERNATIONAL ELECTION OBSERVATION MISSION
Democratic Republic of the Congo
December 5, 2023

Introduction

The Carter Center has been active in the Democratic Republic of the Congo since 2006, working to promote democratic elections, protect human rights and advance transparency and accountability in extractive industries. On June 24, 2023, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) invited The Carter Center to observe the 2023 elections

In response to the invitation, The Carter Center deployed an international election observation mission (IEOM) in September 2023, led by mission director Nicolas Teindas. The IEOM officially started on Sept 25 with a core team of 16 (eamei)-6 (n<ev(T)67 TJ 0 Twl4 (f)-8sy)-10 tm0.001 1T

observation delegation. The limited number of short-term observers means that the IEOM will not have a sufficient nationwide presence to make comprehensive conclusions about the conduct of election day.

The Carter Center expresses gratitude to the government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo for the invitation to observe the D20 elections. The Carter Center thanks the CENI for its prompt efforts to ensure timely accreditation of its observers and for its cooperation with IEOM observers and staff at the national, provincial and local levels.⁵

Electoral Calendar

The CENI has prioritized the organization of the elections within the constitutional deadline including the registration of voters and candidates, ongoing cascade trainings of election officers and procurement and distribution of election materials.

The electoral calendar was tightly compressed in part due to delays in amending the organic law on the CENI as well as selecting and installing the CENI president and the other 14 members of the CENI. In February 2022, the CENI released its 2022-2027 roadmap which laid out the basis of the electoral activities to follow, such as the operational cartography exercise included in September 2022. The roadmap flagged potential constraints that could hamper the election process such as the availability of financial means, the slow process of operations to identify the population and voters, the weak operational capacity of the CENI and insecurity in the country.⁶ On Nov. 26, 2022, the CENI published the electoral calendar.

Registration of Voters

From late December 2022 to mid-April 2023, the CENI conducted voter registration operations to build a new biometric voter register. The CENI stated that it enrolled 43.9 million voters during this period, following the deletion of 3.3 million records during the data cleaning operation.

The CENI completed voter registration largely on schedule, keeping the elections on track to be held within the constitutional deadline. However, the quality of the voter register has been questioned by numerous IEOM interlocutors who have cited concerns about the quality and transparency of the process. Concerns about the voter list have contributed to distrust among stakeholders around the electoral process.

About 5 million voters were not registered compared with the CENI's original target. Insecurity affected implementation of the process in some areas, especially in the northeast of the country where about 1.7 million voters could not be registered. Due in part to time constraints caused by

⁵ The Carter Center IEOM is funded by a contribution from USAID and from Carter Center resources. The Carter Center IEOM operates in accordance with the [Declaration Principles for International Election Observation](#) and its observation findings and conclusions are fully independent. The findings and recommendations contained in this interim report are those of The Carter Center and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the government of the United States.

⁶ CENI, Feuille de Route (Feb 3, 2022) <https://www.ceni.cd/sites/default/files//2023-03//FEUILLE%20DE%20ROUTE.pdf>

The Carter Center also encourages the CENI and civil society actors to increase voter education and voting information activities and continue organizing inclusive consultation frameworks in all provinces.

On election day, accredited citizen observers will play a crucial role providing transparency. The CENI and its provincial offices should make sure that all observer applications submitted within the legal deadline are duly processed at the same time. The Carter Center urges political parties, political groupings, and independent candidates to deploy trained party agents on election day to the extent possible.

To promote transparency and public acceptance of the results, the Carter Center urges the CENI to publish the results by polling station, both at polling centers and on its website, as per the electoral law.