The Democratic Republic of Congo (DR-Congo) President Felix Tshisekedi held his last political campaign on Sunday ahead of the polls in a bid to retain his seat in office.

Tshisekedi called on the Congolese to vote en masse for him in order to continue the work of reconstructing the country that is underway.

“Trust me by voting for number 20 in the upcoming presidential election on December 20th, you will not regret it. I want to complete the work that I have already begun together with you,” Félix Tshisekedi said in his speech.

The incumbent candidate was also scheduled to visit Mbanza-Ngunguin the western part of the DR Congo. However, this stop was cancelled due to inclement weather, with a promise to return before the end of the electoral campaign.

Analysts say Moise Katumbi, a 58-year-old business magnate and former provincial governor, poses the strongest challenge to Tshisekedi.

The election campaigns have taken place in relative calm, a feat in a country whose peaceful transition of power since independence in 1960 occurred in 2018.

According to the electoral calendar of the Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI), about 44 million registered voters are expected to cast their votes in the vast Central Africa Nation of about 100 million people on December 20, 2023 in presidential, parliamentary, provisional and municipal polls.

Some 22 candidates were vying to become the next president of DRC in Wednesday’s election, however 7 have already withdrawn leaving 15 candidates.

While some 25,000 candidates are vying for parliamentary seats, Ceni has revealed that the elections will cost more than $1.1 billion, and the country is still facing logistical challenges, including how to secure votes and voters in Eastern DRC, where war has recently resumed between M23 and the Congolese army (FARDC) and allied militias.

Human Rights Watch warned last weekend of electoral violence which “risks compromising the holding of the vote”. Since the beginning of October, the NGO says that it has documented clashes between supporters of rival parties leading to “attacks, sexual violence and at least one death”.

The concern is also great in view of the “hate speech” held during the campaign, which increases the risk of violence between communities.

The head of MONUSCO, Bintou Keita, herself expressed on X her “concern” in the face of this type of speech and the “escalation of violence”.