

Opposition politician Felix Tshisekedi has been declared winner in the Democratic Republic of Congo presidential elections, according to provisional results announced by Corneille Nangaa, head of the Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI), in Kinshasa.

Provisional results indicate that Tshisekedi obtained 7,051,013 votes, or 38.57% followed by Martin Fayulu from opposition coalition Lamuka, who obtained 6,366,732 votes, or 34.83%. Emmanuel Ramazani Shadary from the ruling coalition came in third with 4,357,359 votes, or 23.84%.

The December 30 polls had a total of 21 candidates vying to replace Joseph Kabila who has ruled the Democratic Republic of Congo for 17 years.

At the announcement of the results, Martin Fayulu who came in second denounced the results as an “electoral coup”, ridiculing the results as nothing to do with the truth of the polls.

Talking on radio RFI, Fayulu said that this was an ugly swindle by Mr. Nangaa and his political camp. He has called on the Electoral Commission, the influential Catholic Church and observers to tell the truth.

The results were initially expected to be announced on Sunday. Out of 40 million voters, more than 18 million could vote, representing 47.46%.

According to media reports, Tshisekedi told supporters at his Union for Democracy and Social Progress party headquarters in Kinshasa that Mr Kabila should no longer be seen as a rival but a partner in democratic change in the country.

Etienne Tshisekedi, 55, is the son of late veteran opposition leader Etienne Tshisekedi, who died on February 1, 2017.

During his campaign he formed an alliance with another popular Congolese politician Vital Kamehre. If Tshisekedi is confirmed, he will be the first opposition to win elections since DR Congo gained independence in 1960.