

Democratic Republic Congo's President Felix Tshisekedi has been declared winner with more than 70% of the vote according to the country's election commission.

The preliminary results of the Dec. 20 election were announced on Sunday in the capital, Kinshasa, amid demands from the opposition and some civil society groups for the vote to be rerun due to massive logistical problems that they said had undermined the balloting.

The commission went further to announce that businessman Moise Katumbi was second having received 18% of the vote, and Martin Fayulu received 5%, finishing third.

Nobel Peace Prize winner Denis Mukwege, a physician renowned for treating women brutalized by sexual violence in eastern Congo, got less than 1%

Speaking from his headquarters in the capital after the results were announced, Tshisekedi thanked his supporters for giving him another five-year term.

"You believed in my commitment so that our country can find its place in the concert of nations," he said.

"You have embraced my vision of society. I will spare no effort for more jobs, more purchasing power, more access to basic services at all levels."

About 18 million people voted in the election, which had a turnout of more than a 40%, according to the election commission. The results will be sent to the constitutional court for confirmation, election chief Denis Kadima said.

Candidates opposing the results have two days to submit their claims, and the constitutional court then has seven days to decide.

The final results are expected on January 10, and the president is scheduled to be sworn in at the end of that month.

DR-Congo has a history of disputed elections that can turn violent.

Before the results were announced on Sunday, opposition candidates, including Katumbi, said they rejected the results and called on the population to mobilize.

The logistical problems included many polling stations being late in opening or not

opening at all.

Some lacked materials, and many voter cards had smudged ink that made them illegible.

Voting in the election had to be extended into a second day— something local observers and civil society organizations have called illegal — and some parts of the country were still casting ballots five days after election day.

“If a foreign country considers these elections to be elections, there’s a problem,” Fayulu told a news conference in the capital on Sunday before the results were announced. “It’s a farce, don’t accept (the results).”

Violence was already flaring in parts of the country before the results were announced.

Earlier this week, clashes erupted between some of Fayulu’s supporters and police officers who fired tear gas at protesters who threw rocks and barricaded themselves inside the opposition headquarters.

Leading up to and during the vote, the election commission was accused of not being transparent enough. The East African Community said its election observer mission was not granted access to Congo, and the European Union canceled its mission after authorities did not authorize the use of satellite equipment by EU monitors.

Analysts say that the thousands of observers that were in the country were unable to say whether the irregularities had an impact on the overall integrity of the results, leaving it to the election commission.

Since his first term in office, Tshisekedi’s track record has been spotty.

He’s struggled to stem violence in the east, a goal he campaigned on.

Conflict in eastern Congo has raged for decades, with more than 120 armed groups fighting for power, resources and to protect their communities. But the violence has spiked during Tshisekedi’s term with the resurgence of the M23 rebels, who have displaced millions of people and seized swaths of land. The fighting prevented 1.5 million people from registering to vote.

Attempts to quell the violence with an East African Force comprised of troops from neighboring countries have failed. The force has pulled out, along with a U.N. peacekeeping mission that has been in Congo for decades.

Most Congolese have noted that Tshisekedi's initiatives of creating free health care for pregnant mothers and babies as well as providing free primary education has changed the lives of some people living in remote villages.