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Democratic Republic of Congo

Tshisekedi or the demagogic Republic of Congo

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Despite a disastrous record, incumbent President Tshisekedi won the elections contested by a divided opposition, by playing on the patriotic fibre against Rwanda.

The result was overwhelming for the President of the Democratic Republic of Congo, Félix Tshisekedi, who took almost 73% of the vote, well ahead of Moïse Katumbi, who obtained 18%. Martin Fayulu, considered by many to be the winner of the 2018 elections, obtained just over 5%. Other candidates, such as Denis Mukwege, scored less than 1%.

Questionable electoral victory

The opposition protested and spoke of a sham election. The poll, which also included provincial legislative and municipal elections, was chaotic. Nearly 8,000 incidents were recorded by the Catholic and Protestant churches, which deployed thousands of observers. Their report indicates that one candidate, whom they did not name, won a large majority of the votes. This lends credence to the outgoing president's victory, even though his result must have been greatly inflated by fraud.

Tshisekedi's repressive policy during the elections and the use of state resources to conduct his campaign enabled him to occupy a large part of the field, with daily coverage by the government media.

During his term in office, he also managed to strengthen the presidential camp by appointing two deputy prime ministers: Vital Kamerhe, who has a strong presence in the east of the country and is guilty of corruption, and Jean-Pierre Bemba, a prominent figure from Equateur province whose militia was involved in war crimes in the Central African Republic.

Félix Tshisekedi has pulled off a tour de force. He used his failure on security issues in the east of the country to focus criticism on Rwandan leader Paul Kagamé, who supports the M23 armed militia that terrorises the people of Kivu. By focusing his campaign on this theme, he benefited from the patriotic feelings of the Congolese people.

The personal egos of the opposition

As a good politician, the outgoing president took advantage of the recurring debate on "Congolese-ness" to discredit his main challenger Moïse Katumbi on the grounds that he was not a true Congolese because of his father's Greek nationality. Another candidate to fall victim to xenophobic remarks is Denis Mukwege. He has been accused of being a foreigner's candidate because he was endorsed by the West when he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his ongoing work on behalf of women victims of sexual violence by armed militias.

With a plethora of presidential candidates with healthy egos and a lack of a real political programme, the opposition was unable to present an alternative to Tshisekedi, whose record is not particularly impressive.

The new winner now has a free hand to step up political repression, or even use the "Congolese-ness" issue to

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promote a change to the Constitution. This would allow him to run for a third term in office, following in the footsteps of most of his fellow potentates on the continent.

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Translated by **International Viewpoint** from [l'Anticapitaliste](#).

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