

Analysis of Congo election data points to “huge fraud” in vote tally

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According to an analysis of election data conducted by the *Financial Times* (FT), Martin Fayulu was the clear winner of the December 30 presidential election in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in which the Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI) declared Felix Tshisekedi the victor. The analysis has uncovered widespread irregularities and fraud in the vote tally and could potentially annul the election.

FT conducted analyses of two separate voting data collections it obtained from an anonymous source, representing 86 per cent of the total votes cast, and found that in both cases Martin Fayulu won 59.4 per cent of the total vote, a sweeping victory over that of officially declared winner Felix Tshisekedi, who took 19 per cent of the vote.

Notably, the conclusion reached by the FT’s analysis of the data corresponds almost perfectly to the figures determined by the Episcopal Conference of Bishops in the Congo (CENCO), the Catholic Church group who placed more than 40,000 election observers at polling stations around the country during the election. CENCO’s conclusion, utilizing results gathered from 28,733 polling stations points remarkably close to the conclusion reached by the far more extensive analysis of the official tally studied by the FT.

The extensive set of data that FT studied consists of more than 49,000 records and reveals a clear case of massive electoral fraud. The records, given to FT by an anonymous source with direct knowledge of how the voting data was obtained, contain the true results that were tallied electronically that authorities in the Kabila government sought to conceal.

With the analysis of the true voting records, FT has exposed as fraudulent the results declaring Tshisekedi the victor.

Jason Stearns, director of New York-based think tank,

Congo Research Group at the Center on International Cooperation, told FT incredulously, “It is extremely difficult to believe . . . that tens of thousands of lines of data could have been fabricated on short notice to produce these results without signs of tampering. This highlights the need for a full, scrupulous audit of the election tallies.”

Kabila government adviser Barnabé Kikaya Bin Karubi denied that elections results were fraudulent, stating it would be up to the Constitutional Court to decide the validity of the election. Karubi declined to speak in any detail regarding any potential election fraud exposed by FT.

On Tuesday, lawyers for Martin Fayulu delivered their appeal to Congo’s Constitutional Court, asking the court to order a complete recount of the election tally, telling the nine-judge panel, “We ask for a recount of the votes from all candidates, polling station by polling station.”

Opposing Fayulu’s appeal were lawyers for Tshisekedi’s Union for Democracy and Social Progress (UDPS) party, who requested the court deny Fayulu’s appeal, stating there was not enough evidence to justify a recount.

For its part, the Southern African Development Community (SADC), an organization of southern and central African countries with the aim of promoting economic development across its member states, which includes the Congo, have made plans to convene an emergency meeting today in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Last week, South African President Cyril Ramaphosa, representing the South African SADC delegation, together with President Edgar Lungu of the Zambian delegation, proposed, then withdrew, a deal for a power-sharing agreement between the Tshisekedi and Fayulu factions. In light of the *Financial Times*’ investigation,

the SADC has now called for a recount.

The explosive revelation of electoral fraud committed by the Kabila regime has caused no small amount of worry for Washington and Europe, who fear a social explosion from the Congolese masses and the outbreak of violence that erupts beyond their control, in turn disrupting American and European economic interests in the country.

Anticipating social unrest, the Trump administration deployed 80 troops to nearby Gabon earlier this month to protect US interests in the Congo from political turmoil arising from the disputed election and promised the deployment of more troops if necessary.

With their typical cynicism and hypocrisy, the United Nations Security Council responded to the election dispute by stating that it “welcomed the peaceful holding of the elections,” and urged all sides to “preserve the generally peaceful climate.”

Exposing the hypocritical pretensions to “peace” by the UN Security Council is the fact that the election was conducted amid heavy-handed police repression, with scores of reports of vote buying, ballot box stuffing, and police intimidation and violence. Internet access across Congo was cut on the order of the Kabila government before the poll on December 30, an edict that remains in effect more than three weeks later.

Underscoring the profit interests at stake in the disputed election is the fact that the Congo possesses vast economic resources, including 60 per cent of the world’s cobalt, used in the manufacture of electronic devices, such as batteries for use in smart phones and laptop computers. The country is also home to significant deposits of diamonds and gold and is Africa’s largest copper producer.

The Congo is one of the most socially unequal countries on earth, ruled by a corrupt clique in Kinshasa, who have become obscenely wealthy by carving up the economic spoils of the Congo on behalf of international banks and corporations. This social crime has been carried out at the expense of the Congolese masses, who suffer impoverished conditions and generalized social misery.

For its part, Washington is seeking to offset its declining economic position by utilizing its vast military might. Primary to American aims in Africa is the neutralization of China, and to halt Beijing’s vast economic influence on the continent. To achieve this,

the Pentagon has vastly expanded AFRICOM’s reach and influence, with outposts in nearly every corner of the African continent, including the construction of a massive drone base in Agadez, Niger.



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