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Human rights in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

New data released today show the extent of human rights violations in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

The Human Rights Measurement Initiative's 2023 data show that human rights continue to be neglected by the DRC's government. The government is not adequately protecting people from the violence and insecurity in the country. It is in fact directly responsible for many of the violent acts committed against Congolese people.

The DRC is achieving far less than what it could achieve at its level of income to protect economic and social rights, including **education, food, health, housing, and work**. Experts on human rights in DRC cite insecurity, high cost of living, lack of infrastructure, and lack of government protection as reasons for people not enjoying economic and social rights.

The right to be **safe from the state** has improved from 3.0 out of 10 in 2018 to 5.2 in 2022. However, this score still suggests that **many people in DRC are not safe** from one or more of the following: arbitrary arrest, torture and ill-treatment, forced disappearance, execution or extrajudicial killing.

Human rights experts identified **human rights advocates, journalists, and people with opposing political opinions** to the government as being especially at risk of violations of these physical integrity rights, among many others.

The DRC scores 4.6 out of 10 on **empowerment** rights, suggesting that **many people are not enjoying their civil liberties and political freedoms**. All three of the government's empowerment rights scores fall in the 'bad' range, and the country is performing **worse than average** in our sample of 30 countries. Human rights experts identified **human rights advocates, protestors, and people with opposing political opinions** to the government as being especially at risk of violations of their empowerment rights, among many others. The authorities censor anyone opposing the government or fighting for democracy, especially in relation to the presidential election.

Since Félix Tshisekedi's election in 2019, physical integrity rights have somewhat improved, but empowerment rights have deteriorated. It's clear from what human rights experts in DRC have reported that **anyone with opposing political views is at high risk of human rights violations**, especially presidential candidates.

"Civil and political rights are a challenge in DRC currently," said lawyer and local human rights expert Emery Mutanda Kabangu, "coming up to the December 2023 elections, it is civil and

political rights that are most violated: in this case, the protest rights, freedom of expression, etc. are violated daily. Opposition politicians currently are the main victims in DRC, in a country, where presidential elections are being held in December 2023. **The space for respect of human rights is shrinking.**”

HRMI Spokesperson Thalia Kehoe Rowden said, ‘All people in the Democratic Republic of Congo deserve to have all their human rights protected by their government. HRMI’s scores, based on both local reporting and international databases, show that **the government is currently not keeping the promises it has made under international law.**’

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About the Rights Tracker: The Rights Tracker is a global project to track the human rights performance of countries systematically. Our 2023 dataset launched today includes annual data on eight civil and political rights for up to 44 countries from the years 2017 to 2022, with Bangladesh, Thailand, and the Maldives added this year. Our data also include inaugural scores on the right to freedom of religion and belief in a pilot set of nine countries. Annual data on five economic and social rights for 196 countries from 2007 to 2020, based on the award-winning SERF Index methodology, is also available. Please visit rightstracker.org for the freely available dataset.

About HRMI: The Human Rights Measurement Initiative (HRMI) is an independent non-profit organisation part of a global movement building a world where all people can flourish. We track the human rights progress of countries, producing robust data that anyone can use to push for improvements in how governments treat people. What gets measured gets improved: if something isn’t being systematically measured, it can be more easily overlooked and undervalued. HRMI data make it easier for decision-makers to monitor their progress, and prioritise human rights. Advocacy based on sound information is one of the key drivers of change. www.humanrightsmmeasurement.org

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