



Oral statement by FIACAT and ACAT DRC

Item 10 - Interactive dialogue on the Democratic Republic of the Congo

41st session of the Human Rights Council

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson,

While the presidential and legislative elections of 30 December 2018 were an important turning point for the Democratic Republic of Congo, the new President and his government still face major challenges in ensuring respect for human rights in the country. In particular, the fight against impunity must be at the heart of its mandate. Similarly to what the team of international experts on the situation in Kasai recommended, several other serious human rights violations during the election period have yet to be addressed.

Thus, impartial, independent and thorough investigations must be carried out into the arson attacks on 16 and 19 September 2016, which were directed against the headquarters of several political parties and the Madame de Sévigné high school in Kinshasa and caused several deaths and injuries.

It is also essential to combat impunity for the human rights violations of December 2018 in the territory of Yumbi, in the province of Mai-Ndombe. According to an investigation by the United Nations Joint Human Rights Office (UNJHRO), inter-ethnic clashes between the Batende and Banunu communities resulted in at least 535 deaths and 111 injuries and the destruction or looting of at least 967 buildings, mainly houses, but also 14 churches, 17 schools and 5 health centres. These conflicts also caused the massive displacement of at least 16,000 people from Yumbi territory, according to figures from the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees. An investigation has been opened by the military justice system despite the fact that these are inter-ethnic conflicts involving mainly civilians and that it does not have the necessary means to carry out this investigation.

The Congolese authorities must therefore ensure that they enhance their efforts to conduct independent and impartial investigations into these violations, prosecute and sentence the perpetrators in proportion to the gravity of their acts and guarantee the victims' right to reparation.

Finally, the international community must continue to support the Congolese government in its fight against impunity, including by ensuring that serious human rights violations are properly documented.

Thank you very much.