**MINISTRY**

**INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND COOPERATION**

 **REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION NO.: 2656**

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**Ms S V Kalyan (DA) to ask the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation:**

Whether the Government has an official position on the (a) alleged maltreatment of a certain person (name furnished), (b) deployment of the armed forces to Kasumbalesa and Kinshasa, who used violence to oppress peaceful supporters of the specified person, (c) use of controversial electronic voting machines despite domestic and international opposition, (d) credibility of voters’ rolls with particular reference to allegations of significant numbers of duplicates and/or (e) continued detention of political prisoners in the Democratic Republic of the Congo; if not, in each case, why not; if so, what are the relevant details in each case?

**REPLY:**

1. During President Ramaphosa’s visit to the DRC, President Kabila briefed the President about the matter of Mr Katumbi during which the government of the DRC explained their national legal requirements that prevented Mr Katumbi from registering in the national elections.

1. It should be noted that the deployment of the members of the DRC armed forces within the sovereign territory of the DRC remains a decision of the government of DRC. In this regard, South Africa, however, echoes the Statement of the UNSC of 17 August 2018 that underlined the importance of the entire Congolese political class and the institutions responsible for organizing elections to remain committed to ensure the success of the rest of the electoral process, leading to a peaceful transfer of power, in accordance with the Congolese constitution.

Further, South Africa also continues to encourage all Congolese stakeholders to create all the necessary conditions to ensure an environment conducive to the peaceful and inclusive conduct of political activities to ensure that the elections take place with the requisite conditions of transparency, credibility and inclusivity.

1. In terms of the concerns regarding the utilisation of electronic voting machines, it should be noted that the Independent National Electoral Commission of the DRC (CENI) gave a presentation on the preparations for the elections and the utilisation of the electronic voting machines to the SADC Double Troika Summit that took place in April 2018. The presentation was noted.

In addition, I wish to refer the Honourable Member to the Joint Communique issued by the Presidency on 10 August 2018 on the President’s Working Visit to the DRC, it states:

*“The two Heads of State noted that the political and security situation is calm throughout the national territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and took note of the significant progress made in the ongoing electoral process in the country, with regard to the commitments made in accordance with the electoral calendar published on 5 November 2017 by the Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI) and providing for the organization of presidential, legislative and provincial elections at the end this year.*

*The two Heads of State noted, among other things, the continued financing of the electoral process by the Congolese Government, which has just completed the stage of submitting candidatures for the presidential, legislative and provincial elections, in compliance with the constitutional rules and national laws of the Democratic Republic of Congo”.*

1. The matter of the detention of any individual was not discussed during the meeting.