

Human Rights Watch

Torture, Former Combatants, Political Prisoners, Terror Suspects, & Terrorists

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2019/09/24/un-rights-body-should-encourage-dr-congo-combat-impunity>

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Interactive dialogue on the Democratic Republic of Congo

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In recent months, some human rights progress has been made in the Democratic Republic of Congo, but there is still a lot of work to be done. We have seen a decline in political repression, as most political prisoners and activists detained solely for exercising their fundamental rights are now free, while many activists and politicians who were in exile have been allowed to return. Rights improvements while still fragile should be encouraged, to pave the way for lasting institutional changes.

However, enormous challenges in Congo remain. Peaceful demonstrators continue to be arbitrarily arrested or roughed up by security forces. It is encouraging that there are no individuals under international sanction for their implication in serious human rights violations in the new government, though this is not the case with high-level positions in the security forces or members of Congo's national intelligence agency. Several high-ranking officers who retain important positions have been involved in human rights violations for years, if not decades. We fear that if this situation persists it will be difficult to put an end to the cycles of violence and impunity especially in eastern Congo, where about 130 armed groups are active. So long as officers who support armed groups and benefit from the insecurity in the east remain in charge, putting an end to abuses will be difficult if not impossible. Instead of being rewarded with senior positions, they should be held accountable for abuses they have committed.

To promote durable peace and security for all Congolese, the government, with the support of the Human Rights Council and other partners, should ensure that justice be a priority and that those people who are responsible for serious human rights violations no longer hold key positions.

The Council should renew the High Commissioners mandate to ensure ongoing monitoring and reporting of the human rights situation in the country and ensure that clear reform benchmarks are identified and met before considering any end to the mandate.

One Year in the Life of the UN Human Rights Council

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