

ADVANCE QUESTIONS TO THE REPUBLIC OF CONGO

CZECH REPUBLIC

- What are the measures the Government of Congo has been taking in order to ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment signed in 2008?
- Has the Government of Congo considered issuing a standing invitation to the Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council?

SWEDEN

- Sweden welcomes the Republic of Congo's drafting of a law in 2006 on promotion and protection of the rights of members of indigenous groups. Discrimination against members of the minority Pigmy ethnic group, however, have continued to be reported.

- What further measures will the Government of Congo take to combat discrimination against minority groups?

- Congo is a state party to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). The Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women expressed, in its last considerations about Congo, concern about the high incidence of violence against women and the apparent lack of clear policies and programmes to address this violation of women's human rights. It was particularly concerned about domestic violence, rape, including marital rape; sexual harassment in the workplace and in institutions of learning, and other forms of sexual abuse of women.

- What measures is the Government of the Republic of Congo taking to eliminate violence and discrimination against women?

- Congo is a state party to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. Torture is also prohibited by the Congolese constitution. Concerns have, however, been raised at the use of torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment by police forces as well as security forces.

- Could the Government of the Republic of Congo elaborate on the measures it is taking to ensure respect for the human rights of prisoners and detainees, in compliance with the Convention Against Torture and Other Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, and other international standards?

THE NETHERLANDS

- Whilst welcoming the forthcoming (presidential) elections, could the government explain why it has chosen to merely update the electoral registry instead of holding a new voter census? Could the government furthermore explain why it has

chosen not to appoint an independent electoral commission to supervise the polls?

- Could the government explain the reports concerning the detention of various former army commanders and asylum seekers without a trial?
- The widespread occurrence of sexual violence against women is an area of concern. What measures is the Congolese government taking to prevent sexual violence against women and what does the government do to hold individuals accountable for human rights violations, especially violations committed by the armed forces?

UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND

- Could you please elaborate on the actions taken by the government in establishing an environment conducive to free and fair presidential elections in July 2009? This also includes a climate free of intimidation and where the right of peaceful assembly is fully respected.
- In view of the elections, could you tell us what measures have been taken to ensure the impartiality and independence of the National Electoral Commission, equal media access for all political parties and a transparent process for the registration of voters?
- We would be grateful for further information on the steps the Republic of Congo is taking to ensure that alleged cases of torture in detention are fully investigated and perpetrators duly prosecuted, in line with the commitments the country has made under the Convention against Torture. In particular, would the Republic of Congo consider implementing a monitoring programme of detention centres run by civil society organisations?
- We would appreciate to know what measures are being taken to address alleged cases of arbitrary detention and reduce the amount of time spent in prison by those awaiting trial, particularly in the case of political prisoners?
- In line with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights ratified by the Republic of Congo, does the Government have any plans to decriminalise homosexuality, which would allow better access to treatment for homosexuals suffering from HIV?
- What steps is the Government taking to ensure the protection of persons belonging to its minorities, indigenous groups and refugees and their equal access to health and education?
- Could you please comment on the existence of a national human rights institution in the Republic of Congo and if it is in full compliance with the Paris Principles? (We understand that Congo does not have a national human rights institution accredited by the International Coordinating Committee of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights).

- Could you please elaborate further on the role civil society in the Republic of Congo played in the preparation of your national report for this process?
