

# ELECTIONS IN THE REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO.

## FONDEMOS' VIEW:



© Daniel Beloumou Olomo / AFP — Voter at a polling station in Brazzaville, March 15, 2026.

### Is an election democratic if its outcome is known in advance ?

The question frames the March 2026 presidential election in the Republic of the Congo, where **Denis Sassou Nguesso**, aged 82 and **in power for over four decades**, has secured a **fifth term** with a respectable 94.82% of the vote, according to results announced on national television.

The campaign unfolded in **a constrained political**

**environment**, marked by the absence, boycott or marginalisation of key opposition figures and restrictions on political freedoms. **The continued detention of former presidential candidates** Jean-Marie Michel Mokoko and André Okombi Salissa, arrested in 2016-2017 and sentenced to 20 years' imprisonment despite serious concerns over the fairness of their trials, further illustrates these constraints.

As Reuters noted, the **"lack of suspense over the outcome" of the election** reflected a broader system characterised by a high concentration of power and limited prospects for alternation.

On polling day, **turnout appeared modest**, particularly in Brazzaville, suggesting not only scepticism but a deeper erosion of belief in political change, whether through elections or public mobilisation. In contexts where both institutional and street-based avenues seem closed, the absence of mobilisation becomes as telling as protest itself.

**A nationwide internet shutdown** was also reported, echoing practices observed in previous elections and raising concerns about transparency.

*In this context, the stakes extend beyond a widely anticipated result. The issue is less whether an election was held than whether it offers a credible framework for choice.*

Restoring the conditions for meaningful political competition requires not only transparency, observer access and verifiable results, but also the **gradual re-emergence of civic engagement**, a process that depends on rebuilding both awareness and confidence in the possibility of change.