

Situation worsens in Paris as police fire tear gas at protesters

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Kinshasa: Police in Congo's capital Kinshasa fired tear gas to break up an opposition march today.

The city was tense with many schools closed, as around five thousand opposition supporters took to the streets demanding elections be held on time.

The opposition fears that incumbent President Joseph Kabila is planning to extend his rule at the end of his democratic mandate.

Earlier this month Congo's constitutional court interpreted Article 70 of the constitution to mean the president can remain in office beyond his mandate if elections, slated for November, are postponed.

The decision means President Joseph Kabila can stay in power until a newly elected leader takes office.

Kabila, who has been in power since 2001 and is meant to leave office in December, is barred by the constitution from seeking a third term.

The opposition has voiced concerns that Kabila would delay elections in order to stay in power.

The electoral commission has already asked to be able to postpone the elections beyond the November mandate.

Last year the opposition held mass protests against revisions to the electoral law that were ultimately scrapped.

Congo has never had a peaceful transfer of power in its 55 years of independence.

- AP