

Kigali, August 27 (ARI.) EU observers consider presidential elections as a good start for democracy in Rwanda.

– The European Union Observers Mission for Elections (MOE UE) for the presidential elections have released preliminary declaration from the just concluded presidential campaigns and elections, Rwanda News Agency reports.

Madam Colette Flesch, Chief observer of elections in Rwanda said that, “The elections on last Monday were calm without any kind of violence and the people of Rwanda should be congratulated for that.”

According to Colette Flesch, the campaigning process was not free and fair. As stated in her declaration, “the electoral campaign was unequal for all candidates (in terms of means) and was dominated by candidate Kagame”.

The declaration highlighted some of the existing conditions whereby government property was used in favor of the incumbent Paul Kagame like distributing gifts meant to campaign for the candidate and sometimes using government owned cars.

“There were cases of harassment to Mr. Faustin Twagiramungu’s supporters where twelve of them were arrested,” Madam Flesch underlined, adding that a member of the opposition Célestin Kabanda was continually called at the Police station which made it difficult to support Twagiramungu and even to get the 600 signatures required by independent candidates in Registering for parliamentary elections.

However, the observation mission credited the National Electoral Commission (NEC) for having improved since the voting of the referendum last May and that they managed to implement changes. But were criticized for having not followed some rules as per elections.

Meanwhile other foreign and local observers have started releasing preliminary reports which are mostly considering the presidential elections as “free and fair”.

The first multi party presidential elections held since Rwanda’s independence and the 1994 genocide saw president Kagame winning with 95.05% followed by the former premier Twagiramungu with 3.62% and lastly Jean Népomuscène Nayinzira with 1.33%.

MOE UE on the invitation of NEC had arrived earlier in the country on 22nd July and they intends to stay for parliamentary elections scheduled September 29th 2003.(End)