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Republic of the Congo: The Congolese Movement for Democracy and Integral Development (Mouvement congolais pour la démocratie et le développement intégral, MCDDI), particularly the treatment of its members by the current government authorities (May 2006)
Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

The following two recent events involving the Congolese Movement for Democracy and Integral Development (Mouvement congolais pour la démocratie et le développement intégral, MCDDI) have had an impact on the relations between the party and the current Congolese government authorities.

The first event was the return of Bernard Kolélas, founding president of the MCDDI, to the Republic of the Congo (*Afriquecentral.info* 23 Apr. 2006; *Keesing's* Oct. 2005, 46864; *Jeune Afrique/L'Intelligent* 16-22 Oct. 2005, 8) after spending eight years in exile (*ibid.*; *Jeune Afrique/L'Intelligent* 16-22 Oct. 2005, 8; *Global Insight* 25 Apr. 2006; PANA 22 Mar. 2005). Barnard Kolélas's return, prompted by his wife's death (*Keesing's* Oct. 2005, 46864; *AllAfrica* 24 Nov. 2005; RFI 7 Oct. 2005), was facilitated by the current Congolese president, Denis Sassou-Nguesso (*Global Insight* 22 Mar. 2006), who assumed the costs of the MCDDI leader's travel, his wife's hospitalization in Paris, the repatriation of her body and her funeral (*Jeune Afrique/L'Intelligent* 16-22 Oct. 2005, 8; see also RFI 7 Oct. 2005). The founding president of the MCDDI, who was sentenced to death in absentia while he was in exile (*Keesing's* Oct. 2005, 46864; *AllAfrica* 24 Nov. 2005; *Jeune Afrique/L'Intelligent* 12-22 Oct. 2005, 8), was granted amnesty by Congolese authorities (*Global Insight* 22 Mar. 2006; *Keesing's* Oct. 2005, 46864; PANA 22 Mar. 2006; *AllAfrica* 24 Nov. 2005).

Corroborating sources refer to a reconciliation between Bernard Kolélas and current president Denis Sassou-Nguesso (*Global Insight* 25 Apr. 2006; *La Lettre du Continent* 30 Mar. 2006; *AllAfrica* 22 Mar. 2005; *ibid.* 23 Dec. 2005). One source cites the MCDDI president as calling on his followers to [translation] "support the Congolese authorities, particularly President Sassou-Nguesso, because they were working together toward peace, an agreement and national reconciliation" (*AllAfrica* 23 Dec. 2002). Moreover, Bernard Kolélas announced that his party had withdrawn from the Coordinated Opposition for a Democratic Alternative (Coordination de l'opposition pour une alternative démocratique, CODE A), a coalition of political opposition parties (*AllAfrica* 23 Dec. 2005; *ibid.* 22 Mar. 2006; *ibid.* 21 Dec. 2005; see also *Global Insight* 22 Mar. 2006). Another source notes that this decision initiated the break-up of the MCDDI (*Global Insight* 22 Mar. 2006). The founding president of the MCDDI also issued a public apology to the Congolese people and asked them to forgive him

for the wrongs he committed during the 1997 civil war (*Africa Research Bulletin* 31 Dec. 2005, 16477; PANA 9 Dec. 2005; see also *Global Insights* 22 Mar. 2006)

The other significant event was the recent resignation of Michel Mampouya from the MCDDI in April (Afriquecentral.info 23 Apr. 2006). Since the exile of Bernard Kolélas in 1997, Mampouya had led the MCDDI faction that joined President Sassou-Nguesso's regime (*Political Parties of the World* 2005, 139; *Global Insight* 25 Apr. 2006). After his resignation, Michel Mampouya announced the creation of a new political party called the Party for the Protection of Values (Parti de la sauvegarde des valeurs, PSV) (Afriquecentrale.info 23 Apr. 2006; *Global Insight* 25 Apr. 2006). His resignation was followed by that of four members of the MCDDI National Committee - Joseph Miakakela, Joseph Nkounkou, Thomas Nsondé and Ms. Mayama - one day after the resignation of Samuel Badinga, member of the party's national executive (AllAfrica 22 Mar. 2006). According to one source, those who resigned justified their actions by their feeling [translation] "frustrated" about [translation] "Bernard Kolélas's new political direction" (ibid.). However, the same article, citing unidentified corroborating sources, adds that Bernard Kolélas's decision to join the current Congolese administration prompted the resignations (ibid.).

No current information on the treatment of MCDDI members could be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection. Please find below the list of additional sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

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Internet sites, including: AllAfrica.com, Amnesty International, BBC News, *CIA World Factbook*, Les Dépêches de Brazzaville, European Country of Origin Information Network (ECOI.net), Factiva, Freedom House, Human Rights Watch (HRW), International Crisis Group (ICG), Fédération internationale des ligues des droits de l'homme (FIDH), IRIN, ReliefWeb, UNHCR, United Kingdom Immigration and Nationality Directorate (IND), United Nations Security Council, United States Department of State.

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