Rwanda: The Amahoro People's Congress, including its history, structure, leadership, objectives and activities; documents provided to members; treatment of members and supporters by authorities (2015-May 2019)

1. Amahoro People's Congress

For information on the Amahoro People's Congress' history, structure, leadership and objectives, see Response to Information Request RWA104986 of November 2014. Further and more recent information on these topics could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

1.1 Activities

According to Radio France internationale (RFI), in August 2015, the Amahoro People's Congress formed a new opposition platform along with four other opposition parties: Victoire Ingabire's FDU [Forces démocratiques unifiées-Inkingi], Deo Mushayidi's PDP [People's Democratic Pact Imanzi], Bernard Ntaganda's PSI [Parti socialiste Imberakuri] and the RNC [Rwanda National Congress] (RFI 18 Aug. 2015). RFI adds that the main objective of the new platform was to oppose the constitutional reform project that aimed to allow President Kagame to run in the 2017 elections (18 Aug. 2018). The midterm report of the UN Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), in a section on armed movements of Rwandan origin operating in the DRC, indicates that the five parties formed a coalition called the "'P5''' (UN 18 Dec. 2018, 9). Likewise, in a report on the situation of human rights in Rwanda by the P5 platform, it is stated that the platform comprises the above five political parties (Plateforme P5 18 Dec. 2017, 2).

In its mid-term report, the UN Group of Experts explains that it has interviewed ex-combatants from South Kivu [a DRC province] who stated that they had received "a briefing during which the armed group [that had recruited them] was called 'P5'" (UN 18 Dec. 2018, para. 37). The ex-combatants also said that the "P5" was described as "Kayumba Nyamwasa's group," Nyamwasa being "an exiled Rwandan general" residing in South Africa and considered "a political opponent in Rwanda" (UN 18 Dec. 2018, para. 37, 44). Jeune Afrique describes Nyamwasa as leader of the RNC (8 Jan. 2019). The ex-combatants interviewed by the UN Group of Experts also stated that the commander of the armed group was Shaka Nyamusaraba (UN 18 Dec. 2018, para. 37). According to the ex-combatants' testimonies, Nyamusaraba reportedly told the new recruits that "the aim of P5 was to liberate Rwanda" (UN 18 Dec. 2018, para. 37, 44). The interviewed ex-combatants also said that the P5 had received weapons and ammunitions from Burundi (UN 18 Dec. 2018, para. 46). Further and corroborating information on the presence and activities of the P5 in the DRC could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

2. Treatment by Authorities
Information on the treatment by the authorities of the Amahoro People's Congress' members and supporters could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response. However, the following information on the treatment of political opponents in general could be useful.

During a telephone interview with the Research Directorate, an assistant professor at the Josef Korbel School of International Studies at the University of Denver who conducted research in Rwanda, more specifically on the impact of violence on women's political mobilization, explained that President Kagame's political opponents or critics refrain from expressing their political opinion in public spaces, such as bars or coffee shops, because they fear being heard by the intelligence services and by government informants (Assistant Professor 25 Apr. 2019). Similarly, during a telephone interview with the Research Directorate, an associate professor at the School of International Development and Global Studies at the University of Ottawa, who studies governance issues in Rwanda, explained that the state's control apparatus is extensively developed and that it includes local forms of surveillance, mainly within local governance structures (Associate Professor 2 May 2019). Likewise, in its report *Freedom in the World 2019*, Freedom House indicates that "[t]he authorities reportedly use informants to infiltrate civil society, further discouraging citizens from expressing dissent" (Freedom House 29 Jan. 2019).

The US Department of State's *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2018* states that the Rwandan government relies on a broad interpretation of laws prohibiting "divisionism, genocide ideology, and genocide denial" in order to silence political dissidents and critics of the government (US 13 Mar. 2019, 14). In a similar fashion, the Associate Professor indicated that the government has put in place a judicial [translation] "control system" where "accusations of negationism or of criticizing [the official version of] the genocide" are used against political opponents who may be detained as a result (Associate Professor 2 May 2019).

According to the Associate Professor, those who express criticism of the government while occupying key local positions (such as teachers or local dignitaries) are particularly at risk of being targeted by the government (Associate Professor 2 May 2019). Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response. In addition, the Assistant Professor noted that lower members of opposition parties may also be targeted by the authorities (Assistant Professor 25 Apr. 2019). Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

Both the Assistant Professor and the Associate Professor indicated that people who are critical of the government are at greater risk of being subjected to threats to their physical safety and of being arrested arbitrarily (Assistant Professor 25 Apr. 2019; Associate Professor 2 May 2019). The Assistant Professor added that they also face the risk of "disappearance, even death" (Assistant Professor 25 Apr. 2019). Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

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 sources consulted.
References

Assistant Professor, University of Denver. 25 April 2019. Telephone interview with the Research Directorate.

Associate Professor, University of Ottawa. 2 May 2019. Telephone interview with the Research Directorate.


Additional Sources Consulted

Oral sources: Amahoro People's Congress.

Internet sites, including: Africa.com; Africanews; Amnesty International; Australia – Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade; Belgium – Cedoca; eci.net; EU – European Asylum Support Office; Factiva; Fédération internationale des ligues des droits de l'homme; France – Office français de protection des réfugiés et apatrides; Human Rights Watch; The Independent [Uganda]; Institute of Policy Analysis and Research – Rwanda.