

# Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada

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> Responses to Information Requests

## Responses to Information Requests

Responses to Information Requests (RIR) respond to focused Requests for Information that are submitted to the Research Directorate in the course of the refugee protection determination process. The database contains a seven-year archive of English and French RIRs. Earlier RIRs may be found on the UNHCR's [Refworld](#) website. Please note that some RIRs have attachments which are not electronically accessible. To obtain a PDF copy of an RIR attachment, please email the [Knowledge and Information Management Unit](#).

5 July 2017

### COD105815.FE

Democratic Republic of Congo: The coalition of opposition political parties, including political parties that are members of the coalition; the treatment of coalition members by the authorities (2016-July 2017)  
Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

#### **1. The Rally of Political and Social Forces for Change in the Democratic Republic of Congo (Rassemblement des forces politiques et sociales de la République démocratique du Congo acquises au changement, hereinafter “the Rassemblement”)**

Several sources indicate that the Rassemblement was formed during a meeting in Genval, Belgium (AFP 9 June 2016; *Le Monde* 10 June 2016; Rassemblement 10 June 2016) on 10 June 2016 (Rassemblement 10 June 2016). In an April 2017 article in *Jeune Afrique*, the Rassemblement is described as [translation] “the main Congolese opposition platform” (*Jeune Afrique* 27 Apr. 2017). According to the Statement of Commitments of the Political and Social Forces for Change in the Democratic Republic of Congo (“Acte d’engagements des forces politiques et sociales acquises au changement en République démocratique du Congo”), the Rassemblement’s founding document, which is published on its website, the signatories of the Statement are:

- Étienne Tshisekedi wa Mulumba [died in Brussels in February 2017], chair of the conference held in Genval from 8 to 9 June 2016;
- The UDPS [In a June 2017 article published by Belgium’s Belga News Agency, the Union for Democracy and Social Progress (l’Union pour la démocratie et le progrès social, UDPS) is described as [translation] “an historic opposition party” in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) (Belga News Agency 9 June 2017). Sources report that the UDPS was led at the time by Étienne Tshisekedi (All Africa 9 June 2017; *Le Potentiel* n.d.)];
- The G7 [According to sources, the following political parties make up the G7: the Social Movement for Renewal (Mouvement social pour le renouveau, MSR), the Alliance for Congo’s Renewal (Alliance pour le renouveau du Congo, ARC), the National Union of Congolese Federalists (Union nationale des fédéralistes du Congo, UNAFEC), the National Union of Federalist Democrats (Union nationale des démocrates fédéralistes, UNADEF), the Alliance of Democrats for Progress (Alliance des démocrates pour le progrès, ADP), the Christian Democrat Party (Parti démocrate chrétien, PDC) and Future of Congo (Avenir du Congo, ACO), and these parties are not a part of the Presidential Majority (Majorité présidentielle) [(MP), a coalition of parties supporting the president] (Radio Okapi 16 Sept. 2015; Amnesty International Sept. 2016, 24). According to an article published in Voice of America (VOA), the G7 chose Moïse Katumbi ([translation] “who joined the opposition in September 2015, after resigning as governor of the former province of Katanga and left the presidential party” (Radio Okapi, 19 June 2017)], as the presidential candidate (VOA 13 June 2016)];

- The Opposition Dynamic (La Dynamique de l'opposition) [A November 2015 article from Radio Okapi, the United Nations (UN) radio station in the DRC (Radio Okapi 22 Sept. 2014), reports that the political platform known as the Opposition Dynamic, founded in November 2015, includes the following opposition parties: the Union for the Congolese Nation (Union pour la nation congolaise, UNC), the Movement for the Liberation of the Congo (Mouvement pour la libération du Congo, MLC), Engagement for Citizenship and Development (Engagement pour la citoyenneté et le développement, Écidé), Forces for Renovation for Union and Solidarity (Forces novatrices pour l'union et la solidarité, FONUS), Envol, the CDER and the ATD (Radio Okapi 4 Nov. 2015)];
- The AR [Sources state that Alternative for the Republic (Alternance pour la République, AR) is composed of 16 political parties and associations which named Moïse Katumbi as the presidential candidate (*Le Phare* 2 May 2016; *La Prospérité* 2 May 2016)];
- The People's Front (Front du peuple) [Sources state that [translation] "Tshisekedi's allies" have rallied around the People's Front (*Le Phare* 18 Feb. 2016; *La Prospérité* 3 Mar. 2016). An article published in March 2016 by the Congolese daily newspaper *La Prospérité* reports that the People's Front is composed of [translation] "several important players from the Congolese opposition," including Jean-Pierre Lisanga Bonganga, Gabin Tshiteya, Laurent Batumona, Jean-Bosco Puna, Richard Ezuluwa, Pascaline Kudura, Monique Kalonda, Jean-Marie Anzelia and Jules Mukumbi (*La Prospérité* 3 Mar. 2016)];
- The MPP [In a 2012 article, Radio Okapi reports that the Popular Presidential Majority (Majorité présidentielle populaire, MPP) [translation] "is the latest [political] platform to be formed around Étienne Tshisekedi," bringing together political parties, civil society associations, traditional authorities and youth associations (Radio Okapi 17 Apr. 2012)];
- The G14 [According to sources, the G14 includes 14 political parties (*Le Phare* 11 Oct. 2010; *All Africa* 21 May 2010)];
- The Convention of Republicans (Convention des républicains, CR) [According to *La Tempête des tropiques*, a French-language Congolese daily newspaper, the CR is an [translation] "opposition political platform ... led by Kisenge Yesu" (*La Tempête des Tropiques* 8 Nov. 2016)];
- Civil Society (Société civile) [Information on the signatory referred to as "Civil Society" could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.] (Rassemblement 10 June 2016).

An article published in September 2016 by *Le Point*, a French weekly news magazine, reports that the Congolese People's Movement (Mouvement du peuple congolais) is one of the Rassemblement's member parties (*Le Point* 19 Sept. 2016). Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

According to several sources, the Rassemblement is made up of a Council of Elders (Conseil des Sages) composed of party representatives and led by Étienne Tshisekedi, as well as the Coordinating Committee (Coordination des actions) (*Le Phare* 10 June 2016; Politico.cd 10 June 2016; Afriwave 13 July 2016), which ensures that decisions are carried out (Afriwave 13 July 2016).

The Rassemblement's Statement of Commitments of the Political and Social Forces for Change in the Democratic Republic of Congo lays out the following demands:

- elections must be organized in accordance with constitutional timelines, and presidential elections must be held by 19 December 2016, pursuant to Article 73 of the Constitution [1];
- political entities which have adopted the same distinctive names, symbols and signs as properly constituted political parties must be dissolved;
- United Nations Security Council Resolution 2277 must be fully implemented [2] under the guidance of an international facilitator supported by a panel of representatives from the United Nations, the European Union, the African Union, the International Organisation of La Francophonie (Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie) and the United States of America;
- All political prisoners, prisoners of conscience, human rights activists and journalists must be immediately and unconditionally released;
- All Congolese political exiles must be allowed to return to the country;
- The political sphere must be liberalized;
- Private media outlets that had been arbitrarily shut down or confiscated must be re-opened;
- Public media must be open to all social and political viewpoints;
- All harassment of opposition members and civil society by tax officials, administrative officials and police officers, as well as arbitrary legal proceedings against the former, must end;
- The structure and function of the Independent National Electoral Commission (Commission électorale nationale indépendante, CENI) and the Constitutional Court must be reviewed;

- CENI must schedule elections for the presidency of the Republic by 19 September of this year, pursuant to Article 73 of the Constitution;

...

(Rassemblement 10 June 2016).

Several sources indicate that the MP rejects the resolutions adopted by the opposition conclave in Genval [united within the Rassemblement (VOA, 10 June 2016)] and considers them to be an attempt at a coup d'état (VOA 10 June 2016; *Forum des As* 13 June 2016; *Le Phare* 13 June 2016).

According to sources, on 13 July 2016, the Rassemblement organized a [translation] "meeting" in Kinshasa (RFI 31 July 2016; VOA 31 July 2016) where Étienne Tshisekedi, who had returned to the DRC after spending two years in Belgium [translation] "for health reasons," was expected to speak (RFI 31 July 2016). According to several sources, [translation] "thousands" of people gathered to attend the meeting (VOA 31 July 2016; *Le Monde* 31 July 2016; *Le Parisien* 31 July 2016). The same sources report that, during his address to participants at the meeting, Étienne Tshisekedi called for [presidential] elections to be held (*Le Monde* 31 July 2016; *Le Parisien* 31 July 2016; VOA 31 July 2016), and for President Kabila to leave office on 20 December 2016 (*Le Monde* 31 July 2016; *Le Parisien*, 31 July 2016).

## 2. Events of 2016

Several sources state that the Rassemblement had refused to participate in a [translation] "dialogue" held in September 2016 (*Le Figaro* 31 Aug. 2016; AFP 1 Sept. 2016; *La Libre Belgique* 2 Sept. 2016) in order to [translation] "help organize the presidential elections" (*Le Figaro* 31 Aug. 2016) and "avert political chaos" (AFP 1 Sept. 2016). Sources indicate that the Rassemblement had previously set out its conditions for participating in the dialogue, such as the release of political prisoners and the cessation of legal proceedings against Moïse Katumbi (*Le Figaro* 31 Aug. 2016; AFP, 1 Sept. 2016). According to an October 2016 article in *Le Potentiel*, a French-language Congolese daily newspaper, the [translation] "dialogue's" participants agreed to the "African Union Precinct Political Agreement (Accord politique de la cité de l'Union africaine)" on 18 October 2016, in Kinshasa (*Le Potentiel* 20 Oct. 2016). In that article, the same source published the agreement, which was signed by the parties described as [translation] "delegates of political and social forces in the [DRC], representatives of the [MP], the political [o]pposition and [c]ivil [s]ociety, as well as Congolese public figures," and which provides for [former president of Togo] Edem Kodjo, chosen by the African Union, to serve as witness and facilitator (*Le Potentiel* 20 Oct. 2016). A document entitled Democratic Republic of the Congo: Is a Peaceful Transition Still Possible? (*République démocratique du Congo : une alternance pacifique est-elle encore possible ?*), published by the Foundation for Strategic Research (Fondation pour la recherche stratégique, FRS), [translation] "France's main centre of expertise on matters of international security and defense" (FRS n.d.), calls the 18 October agreement [translation] "totally ineffectual" and states that it is contested by "players" who did not participate in it, including the Rassemblement, while the agreement was supposed to "defuse the risks of public protests" (FRS 16 Feb. 2017, 5). The Congolese daily *Le Phare*, published in Kinshasa, states in an October 2016 article that the people of the Congo rejected both the agreement and the [translation] "non-inclusive" dialogue (*Le Phare* 20 Oct. 2016).

Sources report that an appeal to the people of the Congo to hold demonstrations on 19 September [translation] ["the day before the constitutionally set deadline to call presidential elections" (VOA 13 Sept. 2016)] was made (BBC 19 Sept. 2016; VOA 13 Sept. 2016) by the Rassemblement "to give President Kabila advanced warning to leave office by 19 December 2016" (VOA 13 Sept. 2016). Similarly, in a September 2016 article, *Le Point* indicates that the Rassemblement chose to organize a [translation] "peaceful march followed by a sit-in in front of the [CENI] headquarters" on 19 September (*Le Point* 19 Sept. 2016). Sources mention [translation] "clashes" in Kinshasa on 19 September, before the demonstration organized by the Rassemblement (AFP 19 Sept. 2016; RFI Sept. 19, 2016). An article published by Agence France-Presse (AFP) in September 2016 states that [translation] "there were several clashes between young people armed with stones and anti-riot police during the morning [of 19 September]" (AFP 19 Sept. 2016). An article published in September 2016 by Radio France internationale (RFI) indicates that [translation] "clashes broke out between opposition protesters and law enforcement" (RFI 19 Sept. 2016). According to sources, authorities reported [translation] "a toll" of 17 dead, including 3 police officers (AFP 19 Sept. 2016; RFI 19 Sept. 2016) and 14 injured among civilians (RFI 19 Sept. 2016). A September 2016 article from Radio Okapi states that opposition protesters set fire to [translation] "several [MP] party headquarters" on 19 September in Kinshasa (Radio Okapi 20 Sept. 2016). Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response. In a September 2016 article, *Le Potentiel* indicates that protests held in Bukavu, Uvira, MbujiMayi, Mbandaka and Béni on 19 September 2016 [translation] "unfolded peacefully" (*Le Potentiel* 23 Sept. 2016). Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

Several sources indicate that on 20 September 2016, opposition parties' headquarters, including those of the UDPS, were set on fire (*Jeune Afrique* 20 Sept. 2016; *Le Monde* 20 Sept. 2016; Radio Okapi 20 Sept. 2016), leading to the deaths of [translation] "several people" (*Le Monde* 20 Sept. 2016). Sources state that those who set fire to the opposition headquarters were [translation] "heavily armed" "soldiers" or "police officers" (*La Croix* 20 Sept. 2016), or "armed men," according to the UDPS national secretary (Radio Okapi 20 Sept. 2016).

In an article published in September 2016, *Jeune Afrique* reports that [translation] "provisional police records" listed 32 deaths due to violence between protesters and police on 19 and 20 September in Kinshasa (*Jeune Afrique* 21 Sept. 2016). In its *Preliminary Investigation Report on Human Rights Violations and Violence Perpetrated During Demonstrations in Kinshasa Between 19 and 21 September 2016*, updated on 7 October 2016, the United Nations Joint Human Rights Office in the DRC (UNJHRO) reported the following concerning the period from 19 to 21 September 2016:

[UNJHRO English version]

[A]t least 53 persons, including seven women, two children, and four police agents, were killed. Forty-eight were killed by [s]tate actors, while the rest of the perpetrators were not clearly identified. One hundred and forty-three persons, including 13 women and 11 children were injured, of which 75 by [s]tate actors and 68 by unidentified perpetrators; and more than 299 people were unlawfully arrested. (UN 7 Oct. 2016, 1)

According to the same source, [UN English version] "[i]n most cases, the injuries were the result of excessive use of force against demonstrators during joint operations and not carried out in self-defence" (UN 7 Oct. 2016, 8).

Several sources report that police prevented a Rassemblement "meeting" from being held on 19 November 2016 (Radio Okapi 19 Nov. 2016; RFI 19 Nov. 2016; Afriwave 20 Nov. 2016). According to sources, security forces were deployed to Kinshasa, and to the home of Étienne Tshisekedi (Afriwave 20 Nov. 2016; Radio Okapi 19 Nov. 2016). Sources report that soccer teams moved into the area where the Rassemblement meeting was to be held, and a women's soccer game was held there and was attended by General Kanyama (RFI 19 Nov. 2016; Afriwave 20 Nov. 2016), the provincial police commissioner (RFI 19 Nov. 2016).

## 2.1 31 December 2016 Agreement

Sources report that a dialogue between the presidential majority and the opposition was established under the aegis of the Congolese Episcopal Conference (Conférence épiscopale du Congo, CENCO) (*Afrique Expansion* 8 Dec. 2016; BBC 8 Dec. 2016). Sources note that this dialogue included the Rassemblement (*Le Phare* 8 Dec. 2016; Afrikarabia 8 Dec. 2016). According to several sources, on 31 December 2016, the MP and the opposition came to an agreement (*La Croix* 2 Jan. 2017; RFI 1 Jan. 2017; Radio Okapi 1 Jan. 2017). Sources indicate that the agreement provides for the following:

- The prime minister will be chosen by the Rassemblement (*Jeune Afrique* 31 Dec. 2016; Radio Okapi 1 Jan. 2017);
- President Kabila will remain in power until the election of his successor in December 2017, will not run in the next election, and will not amend the Constitution (*Jeune Afrique* 31 Dec. 2016; *Le Monde* 31 Dec. 2016; Radio Okapi 1 Jan. 2017);
- Presidential elections will be held by the end of 2017 (*Jeune Afrique* 31 Dec. 2016; *Le Monde* 31 Dec. 2016; Radio Okapi 1 Jan. 2017);
- An oversight body led by Étienne Tshisekedi will monitor the implementation of the agreement (*Jeune Afrique* 31 Dec. 2016; *Le Monde* 31 Dec. 2016).

In a January 2017 article, Radio Okapi reports that the agreement also provides for the release of political prisoners (Radio Okapi 1 Jan. 2017). A *Jeune Afrique* article from December 2016 also states that the agreement provides for [translation] "confidence building measures" concerning four political prisoners and political exiles, notably the cessation of legal proceedings against three of them and the release of the fourth (*Jeune Afrique* 31 Dec. 2016). A January 2017 article from RFI reports that, according to CENCO, discussions were to be held concerning a [translation] "particular arrangement" (RFI 1 Jan. 2017). In an article published in January 2017, the French daily newspaper *La Croix* reports that CENCO had [translation] "committed to resuming negotiations" to resolve details such as "the timeline for nominations and the creation of the National Transition Council (Conseil national de transition)" (*La Croix* 2 Jan. 2017). An article published by *Le Monde* in December 2016 states that CENCO was [translation] "anxious to resolve the final disputes ... [including] the timeline for implementing the agreement and the deadlines for the future prime minister's taking office" (*Le Monde* 31 Dec. 2016).

### 3. Events of 2017

Several sources indicate that Étienne Tshisekedi died on 1 February 2017, in Brussels (*Le Monde* 1 Feb. 2017; *Le Phare* 3 Feb. 2017; Radio Okapi 1 Feb. 2017). Sources report that Étienne Tshisekedi's death [translation] "weakened" the Rassemblement (RFI 4 Mar. 2017) and "crippled" its cohesion (International Crisis Group 6 Apr. 2017). Sources mention [translation] "warring factions" within the Rassemblement (Politico.rd 7 Mar. 7, 2017) and a "schism" within the coalition (RFI 4 Mar. 2017). According to several sources, in March 2017, the Rassemblement designated Félix Tshisekedi as president and Pierre Lumbicombe as president of the Council of Elders (Radio Okapi 3 Mar. 2017; Afriwave 3 Mar. 2017; RFI 4 Mar. 2017). According to sources, dissident Rassemblement members designated Joseph Olenghankoy [Mukundji] [president of FONUS] as president of the Council of Elders (Radio Okapi 3 Mar. 2017; Afriwave 3 Mar. 2017; RFI 4 Mar. 2017) on 3 March 2017 (Radio Okapi 3 Mar. 2017). According to an article published by Radio Okapi in March 2017, one wing of the Rassemblement includes Félix Tshisekedi and Pierre Lumbi; a second wing, which challenged that appointment, is led by Olenghankoy; and a third wing [translation] "consisting of members of the Badibanga government who also claim to be part of the Rassemblement, designated Patrick Mayombe and Clément Kankyu as leaders" (Radio Okapi 6 Mar. 2017).

Sources report that on 27 March 2017, CENCO ended its mediation between the government and the opposition (*Jeune Afrique* 28 Mar. 2017; Radio Okapi 28 Mar. 2017), [translation] "without having brought the two parties to an agreement" (Radio Okapi 28 Mar. 2017). Several sources report that the parties did not reach an agreement concerning the designation of the prime minister (Afrikarabia 28 Mar. 2017; *Le Phare* 27 Mar. 2017; Radio Okapi 28 Mar. 2017) or the presidency of the National Council Overseeing the Agreement (Conseil national de suivi de l'accord, CNSA) (Afrikarabia 28 Mar. 2017; *Le Phare* 27 Mar. 2017), and the division of ministerial positions (*Le Phare* 27 Mar. 2017). According to sources, CENCO officials have called for the head of state's [translation] "involvement" in continuing discussions (Afrikarabia.com 28 Mar. 2017; *L'Avenir* 29 Mar. 2017). Several sources state that the wing of the Rassemblement represented by Félix Tshisekedi refused to participate in consultations led by the head of state (Africanews 31 Mar. 2017; Radio Okapi 4 Apr. 2017; RFI 31 Mar. 2017).

An article published by Radio Okapi on 3 April 2017 reports that, on that date, following the Rassemblement's appeal for a [translation] "ghost town day," "social and economic activity ... in several of the country's cities" were paralyzed (Radio Okapi 3 Apr. 2017). An article published by RFI on 3 April 2017 also indicates that [translation] "the country's three main cities [Kinshasa, Lubumbashi and Mbuji-Mayi] came to a standstill" on that day (RFI 3 Apr. 2017). According to the article published by Radio Okapi on 3 April 2017, the appeal was intended [translation] "to get the head of state, Joseph Kabila, to implement the agreement ... that provides for the formation of a transitional government led by a member of the opposition, and for elections to be held before the end of 2017" (Radio Okapi 3 Apr. 2017). The article published by RFI on 3 April 2017 indicates that this appeal aimed to [translation] "protest the blocking of political dialogue since the agreement of 31 December" (RFI 3 Apr. 2017).

#### 3.1 Naming of Bruno Tshibala as Prime Minister

Sources report that on 7 April 2017, President Kabila named Bruno Tshibala Prime Minister (France 24 10 Apr. 2017; *Le Potentiel* 19 Apr. 2017; Radio Okapi 7 Apr. 2017). Sources indicate that Bruno Tshibala was a member of the UDPS (*Le Potentiel* 8 Apr. 2017; Radio Okapi 7 Apr. 2017; RFI 7 Apr. 2017) and that he had been [translation] "banished" (*Le Potentiel* 8 Apr. 2017) or "excluded" from the party (RFI 7 Apr. 2017). According to sources, Bruno Tshibala was also the spokesperson for the Rassemblement (Radio Okapi 7 Apr. 2017; RFI 7 Apr. 2017). Sources state that Bruno Tshibala had endorsed the dissident wing of the Rassemblement (RFI 7 Apr. 2017; *Le Potentiel* 8 Apr. 2017), alongside Joseph Olenghankoy (*Le Potentiel* 8 Apr. 2017). Sources report that, in the Rassemblement's opinion, the nomination of Bruno Tshibala [translation] "violated the 31 December agreement" (RFI 10 Apr. 2017a) and "was not founded on any legal framework ... and did not refer to the 31 December agreement" (Radio Okapi 8 Apr. 2017).

#### 3.2 Events of 10 April 2017

Several sources report that the Rassemblement called for demonstrations on 10 April 2017 (Afrikarabia 10 Apr. 2017; AFP 10 Apr. 2017; RFI 10 Apr. 2017b) to protest the non-observance of the 31 December 2016 agreement (Afrikarabia 10 Apr. 2017; RFI 10 Apr. 2017b). The same sources indicate that the authorities banned the demonstrations and that police officers were deployed (AFP 10 Apr. 2017; Afrikarabia 10 Apr. 2017) in Kinshasa (Afrikarabia 10 Apr. 2017; RFI 10 Apr. 2017). In an article published on 10 April 2017, Radio Okapi indicates that there were marches held in Lubumbashi, Bukavu and Mbandaka, but they were broken up by police (Radio Okapi 10 Apr. 2017). An article published on 10 April 2017 by RFI reports that arrests were made, [translation] "primarily of Rassemblement officials or activists ... who were attempting to gather prior to the protest march" in Bukavu, Goma, Kindu, Lubumbashi and Mbuji-Mayi (RFI

10 Apr. 2016). An article published by Afrikarabia, a news website dedicated to the DRC and hosted by journalist Christophe Rigaud (Afrikarabia n.d.), also indicates that the Rassemblement [translation] "condemned ... the fact that several hundred arrests were made both in and outside of the Congolese capital" (Afrikarabia 10 Apr. 2017). In a 12 April 2017 article, the AFP quotes a UNJHRO representative who states that 132 arrests were documented on 10 April 2017 (AFP 12 Apr. 2017). An article published in April 2017 by *La Prospérité* reports that the MP's political office met on 10 April 2017 and that [translation] "at the conclusion of the discussions," the MP "condemned the Rassemblement's manoeuvres ... which were liable to hinder the implementation of the 31 December agreement ... and stated that all of the Rassemblement's current actions were dilatory tactics intended to prevent the election process from moving forward" (*La Prospérité* 11 Apr. 2017).

### 3.3 The 27 April 2017 Agreement

Several sources indicate that the [translation] "special arrangement" was signed on 27 April 2017 (Radio Okapi 27 Apr. 2017; RFI 27 Apr. 2017; *Jeune Afrique* 27 Apr. 2017). An article published on 27 April 2017 by *Jeune Afrique* indicates that the special arrangement was concluded between the [translation] "Joseph Kabila camp" and the "[Rassemblement] dissidents ... and other opposition members" (*Jeune Afrique* 27 Apr. 2017). According to an article published on 27 April 2017 by Radio Okapi, the Speaker of the National Assembly explained that this agreement [translation] "defines the terms under which the 31 December agreement will be applied" (Radio Okapi 27 Apr. 2017). According to an article published on 27 April 2017 by RFI, [translation] "this arrangement was expected to provide a concrete plan for the sharing of power and management of the transition until the time of the elections" (RFI 27 Apr. 2017). According to sources, Joseph Olenghankoye and Lisanga Bonganga signed this agreement on behalf of the Rassemblement (Radio Okapi 27 Apr. 2017; *Jeune Afrique* 27 Apr. 2017). Sources also report that the wing of the Rassemblement represented by Félix Tshisekedi did not sign the document (*Jeune Afrique* 27 Apr. 2017; Radio Okapi 27 Apr. 2017).

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 in researching this Information Request.

### Notes

[1] Article 73 of the Constitution of the Democratic Republic of the Congo stipulates that:

[translation]

Article 73

The ballot for the election of the President of the Republic is scheduled by the National Elections Commission ninety days before the end of term of the incumbent President (DRC 2006).

[2] According to an article published in 2016 on the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the DRC website concerning UN Security Council Resolution 2277, an official from the public information office explains that the Security Council [translation] "also requests that all parties involved engage in an open and inclusive political dialogue concerning the scheduling of presidential elections, pursuant to the [C] onstitution" (UN 15 July 2016).

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