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COD104020.FE

16 April 2012

Democratic Republic of Congo: Membership cards for the Union for Democracy and Social Progress (UDPS), including the content of these cards; who can issue UDPS membership cards and whether any new cards have been issued since 2008

Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

1. Membership cards

Under section 6 of the by-laws (*Règlement intérieur*) of the Union for Democracy and Social Progress (Union pour la démocratie et le progrès social, UDPS), as set out in decision no. 003/UDPS/PP/011 of 04 January 2011 on the enactment of the party's amended and supplemented by-laws (*Décision n° 003/UDPS/PP/011 du 04 janvier 2011 portant promulgation du Règlement intérieur modifié et complété du parti*), [translation] "proof of membership in the UDPS requires signing a membership form, purchasing a membership card, and renewing membership on a regular basis" (UDPS 25 Jan. 2011). Section 10 of the by-laws states that party members must purchase a membership card (ibid.).

According to section 17 of the by-laws, the UDPS president's office manages [translation] "the general file of active members" (ibid.). The same section states that the general file is based on lists drawn up by groups at lower levels of the party hierarchy (ibid.). The president's office also validates the [translation] "standard format membership cards" (ibid.).

1.1 Format and content of membership cards

Section 9 of the UDPS by-laws indicates that [translation] "membership cards are in a standard format" and show information about the cardholder's paid membership fees (UDPS 25 Jan. 2011). Additional information about the format of UDPS membership cards or the information they contain could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

2. Issuance of membership cards

2.1 UDPS structure and card distribution

Under section 30 of the amended and supplemented UDPS constitution (*Statuts modifiés et complétés*), party members are grouped into federations, sections, subsections and cells (UDPS 14 Dec. 2010). Federations correspond [translation] "to regions, cities and foreign host countries," sections correspond "to communes in urban areas and territories in rural areas," subsections correspond "to

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sectors or chiefdoms in rural areas," and cells correspond "to districts in urban areas and to groups in rural areas" (ibid.). Section 31 of the amended and supplemented UDPS constitution specifies that, under the federations' supervision, the sections, subsections and cells are responsible for member recruitment and identification (ibid.). Section 29 of the by-laws states that these lower-level groups send [translation] "the lists of party members and reports on membership-card sales and fees" to the higher-level group "every year by 15 September at the latest" (ibid. 25 Jan. 2010).

In correspondence with the Research Directorate, a UDPS-Canada representative provided the following details on the structure of UDPS-Canada:

- Representation/federation: the host country, Canada.
- Sections: provinces where there are several members. Canada's federal capital, Ottawa, is an exception as it is represented by a full section separate from the Ontario section.
- Cells: cities.
- Subcells: districts (UDPS-Canada 13 Mar. 2012).

The representative also provided the following details on the distribution of UDPS membership cards within the party:

[translation]

Membership cards are issued by the UDPS political administration based in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo. The party's general secretariat then sends them to all the federations abroad and in the country, which in turn distribute the cards to the sections, cells and subcells in their respective jurisdictions. If necessary, members may contact one of the groups noted above to request a membership card (ibid.).

2.2 Procedure for issuing cards to members

The UDPS-Canada representative explained that a person who wants to obtain or replace a card may apply to a section or cell (13 Mar. 2012). The representative stated that former UDPS members who submit an application must complete a personal information form (ibid.). The representative also provided the following details on the procedure for submitting applications:

- The section or cell verifies the proof of party membership provided by applicants to ensure that they are indeed party members. When applicants belong to a different group than the one they are applying to for a card (for example, a former party member in the Congo leaves the Congo for whatever reason to go to Canada, and applies for a card in Canada), they must provide the old membership card as proof of membership in the UDPS. Membership must be confirmed by the testimony of at least three members in good standing of UDPS-Canada who knew the applicants as party members in the Congo. If no UDPS-Canada member knows them, the UDPS-Canada federation makes inquiries with the former federation, section or cell where the applicants claim to have been members in order to confirm whether or not they were members of the UDPS.
- If membership is confirmed, the head of the group that made the inquiry indicates his approval in the appropriate section of the personal information form.
- The section or cell verifies that the applicants have paid their party membership fees for at least the last six months. To do this, applicants must provide the receipts issued by their former section or cell. If the receipts for membership fees are not available, the applicants must pay the fees to the federation in Canada.

- Applicants pay CA\$20 to a section or cell to purchase a membership card.
- The section issues the membership card.

3. New cards

According to the Congolese daily *La Prospérité*, [translation] "special" new UDPS membership cards were printed for the 2011 presidential election campaign (3 Nov. 2011). According to the daily newspaper, the party was expecting to print 18 million membership cards (ibid.). In a press statement issued during the election campaign, the party's secretary-general stated that the voter mobilization campaign provided an opportunity to identify and recruit members, and it gave members a chance to buy the [translation] "new" card (UDPS 23 Mar. 2011).

Details about this new card or information indicating that other card formats were used between 2008 and 2011 could not 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 sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

References

La Prospérité [Kinshasa]. 3 November 2011. "Congo-Kinshasa : UDPS donne un ultimatum de 24 heures au gouvernement." <<http://fr.allafrica.com/stories/201111031248.html>> [Accessed 12 Mar. 2012]

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_____. 14 December 2010. *Statuts modifiés et complétés.* <<http://www.udps.org/docs/statuts.pdf>> [Accessed 12 Mar. 2012]

UDPS-Canada. 13 March 2012. Correspondence sent to the Research Directorate by the assistant representative.

Additional Sources Consulted

Oral sources: A representative from the UDPS section in Canada was unable to provide any information within the time constraints for this Response. Attempts to contact the offices of the Union pour la démocratie et le progrès social (UDPS) in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, France, Belgium and the United States were unsuccessful.

Internet sites, including: *Africa Times*, *Afrique en Ligne*, *Afrique Rédaction*, *AllAfrica*, *Association africaine de défense des droits de l'homme (ASADHO)*, *CongoForum*, *La Conscience*, *Digitalcongo.net*, *ecoi.net*, *Factiva*, *Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN)* - *Refworld*, *Inter Press Service*, *Jeune Afrique*, *L'Observateur*, *Le Phare*, *Le Potentiel*, *Radio France internationale (RFI)*, *Radio*

Okapi, *Le Satellite*, United Kingdom Home Office.

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