

# Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada

[Home](#) > [Research Program](#) > [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.

18 July 2013

### **COD104434.FE**

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 2010 (2010-July 2013)

Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

#### **1. Content of Membership Cards**

In correspondence with the Research Directorate, an official of the Union for Democracy and Social Progress (Union pour la démocratie et le progrès social, UDPS) in Canada stated that membership cards may be obtained in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and outside the country (UDPS-Canada 15 July 2013). According to the official, [translation] "this depends on where the member requested the card" (ibid.).

The official pointed out that

[translation]

membership cards are issued by the UDPS general secretariat 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 and cells in their respective jurisdictions. If necessary, members may contact one of the groups noted above to request a membership card. (ibid.)

According to the official, the UDPS issues membership cards each time there is a large party event, such as the party's first congress or the elections of November 28, 2011 (ibid.). The official explained that the membership cards help to finance the party, because the UDPS [translation] "lives off only the membership fees and the sale of membership cards" (ibid.). He added that there are four kinds of membership cards circulating (ibid.). A copy of two of these cards, the Special First Congress Card and the membership card, which was sent to the Research Directorate by the UDPS-Canada official, is attached to this Response. Further information on the two other membership cards could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

#### **2. Procedure for Issuing Cards**

The official stated that a person who wants to obtain or replace a UDPS membership card [translation] "must be a party member and must have paid their party membership fees" (ibid.). The official also provided the following details on the procedure to follow for obtaining or replacing a membership card:

[translation]

- Applicants must apply to their cell or section to obtain or replace a UDPS membership card.
- Former members must complete a personal information form.
- The section or cell concerned verifies the proof of party membership provided by the applicant to ensure that they are indeed a party member.
- If 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 applicant as a party member 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 applicant claims to have been a member in order to confirm whether or not they were a member of the UDPS.
- If membership is confirmed, the head of the group that made the inquiry indicates their approval in the appropriate section of the personal information form.

- The section or cell verifies that applicants have paid their party membership fees. To do this, applicants must provide the receipts issued by their former section or cell. If the receipts for membership fees are not available, applicants must pay their fees to the federation in Canada.
- Applicants pay \$20 to the section or cell to purchase a membership card.
- The section issues the membership card. (ibid.)

If a UDPS member does not have their former card because they lost it or had it stolen, UDPS will issue a [translation] "'proof of membership' after making inquiries with the former federation, section or cell where the applicant claims to have been a member to confirm whether or not they were a member of the UDPS" (ibid.).

Further information on membership cards 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 in researching this Information Request.

## Reference

Union pour la démocratie et le progrès social in Canada (UDPS-Canada). 15 July 2013. Correspondence from an official to the Research Directorate.

## Additional Sources Consulted

**Oral sources:** Attempts to contact the offices of the UDPS in South Africa, Germany, Angola, Belgium, Denmark, the United States, France, Gabon, the United Kingdom and Switzerland were unsuccessful. The UDPS officials in the Democratic Republic of the Congo were unable to provide information within the time constraints of this Response.

**Internet sites, including:** *Africa Times*; Afrique en ligne; Afriqueindex.com; Agence congolaise de presse; AllAfrica; Association africaine de défense des droits de l'homme; Chronologies Afrique centrale; Congo Forum; *Congo Indépendant*; Congo Mikili News; *La Conscience*; Direct.cd; La Dynamique congolaise; ecoi.net; Factiva; *Jeune Afrique*; Mediacongo.net; Œil d'Afrique; Office français de protection des réfugiés et apatrides; Political Handbook of the World 2012; *Le Potentiel*; *La Prospérité*; Radio France internationale; Radio Okapi; Reporters sans frontières; Réseau européen pour l'Afrique centrale; Réveil-FM; UDPS France; UDPS Lièges; UDPS.be; UDPS.org; United Nations – Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, United Nations Development Program, Refworld, Integrated Regional Information Networks; United States – Department of State; La Voix de la démocratie congolaise.

## Attachment

Union pour la démocratie et le progrès social in Canada (UDPS-Canada). N.d. Special First Congress Card and membership card. Copy provided to the Research Directorate by the official of UDPS-Canada.

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