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Issue Paper DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO SITUATION OF SELECTED GROUPS April 1998

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Source: Washington, DC.; National Geographic Society 1990

GLOSSARY

AFDL

Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire (Alliance des forces démocratiques pour la libération du Congo-Zaïre)

ANC

Congolese National Army (Armée nationale congolaise)

AZADHO

Human Rights Association of Congo-Kinshasa (Association de défense des droits de l'homme de Congo-Kinshasa)

CENADHO

National Human Rights Centre (Centre national pour les droits de l'homme)

CODHO

Human Rights Observers Committee (Comité des observateurs des droits de l'homme)

CRONGD

Regional Council of Non-Governmental Organizations (Conseil régional des organisations non gouvernementales)

DEMIAP

Military Detention for Unpatriotic Activities (Détenition militaire pour des activités anti-patrie)

FAZ

Zairian Armed Forces (Forces armées zaïroises)

FONUS

Innovative Forces for Unity and Solidarity (Forces novatrices pour l'unité et la solidarité)

PALU

Unified Lumumbist Party (Parti lumumbiste unifié)

UDPS

Union for Democracy and Social Progress (Union pour la démocratie et le progrès social)

VSV

Voice of the Voiceless for Human Rights (Voix des sans voix pour les droits de l'homme)

1. INTRODUCTION

This paper is a follow-up to ZaireDemocratic Republic of Congo: Chronology of Events, January-July 1997, an August 1997 Research Directorate publication describing the events that brought the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire (AFDL) to power in Zaire (since renamed the Democratic Republic of Congo). While focusing on the new Congolese regime's treatment of human rights activists, political opponents, journalists and former high-ranking officials since mid-July 1997, the paper also examines the situation of other groups such as students, former soldiers, and prominent Kivu personalities, as well as the ongoing interethnic conflicts in North and South Kivu.

2. BACKGROUND

In May 1997, a rebellion that had begun more than seven months earlier ended with the AFDL troops ousting President Mobutu from power (Country Reports 1997 1998, Introduction; The Economist 12 July 1997; UNHCR 5 Jan. 1998, para. 11-13). The AFDL appointed its leader, Laurent-Désiré Kabila, to the position of head of state, and renamed the country the "Democratic Republic of Congo" (DRC) (HRW Dec. 1997, 12-13; Country Reports 1997 1998, Introduction). Kabila established a transitional government and scheduled general elections for 1999 (ibid.); non-AFDL members of the government serve on a personal basis, and not as representatives of any party (ibid., section 2b; United Nations 17 Oct. 1997, para. 69). In practice, however, they have to align themselves with the AFDL (UNHCR 5 Jan. 1998, para 16.4). All activity on the part of political parties other than the AFDL is prohibited during the transitional period (New African Dec. 1997, 10; The Economist 12 July 1997; Jeune Afrique 16 Dec. 1997-5 Jan. 1998, 43). A commission to draw up a new constitution was created around 22 October 1997 (Le Monde diplomatique Dec. 1997; Africa Research Bulletin 1-31 Oct. 1997, 12859; UNHCR 5 Jan. 1998, para. 13), but it excluded non-AFDL members (HRW Dec. 1997, 4). Preparations for the elections are reportedly already well behind schedule (New African Dec. 1997, 10; United Nations 17 Oct. 1997, para. 81-84; HRW Dec. 1997, 5). Since the AFDL came to power, the country has been governed by presidential decree (United Nations 17 Oct. 1997, para. 55; Country Reports 1997 1998, Introduction; HRW Dec. 1997, 4).

A presidential decree issued by Kabila on 28 May 1997 stipulates that the state structure consists of the president, the government and the courts and tribunals, but places the authority of the state in the hands of the president (United Nations 17 Oct. 1997, para. 53-54; Country Reports 1997 1998, Introduction; Info-CongoKinshasa 11 Aug. 1997b, 2). Info-CongoKinshasa emphasizes that the rule of law is still fragile in the DRC and states that it is not clear who really wields power in the country (11 Aug. 1997a, 1). It would appear that the real powers of the state, including judicial powers, are effectively concentrated in the AFDL and President Kabila (United Nations 17 Oct. 1997, para. 57 et 69; Info-CongoKinshasa 11 Aug. 1997b, 2; AZADHO 19 Jan. 1998).

The country has seen a number of changes under the new regime, which has undertaken several new projects, stabilized the currency and created a climate where the population no longer lives in fear of looters (Info-CongoKinshasa 11 Aug. 1997a, 1; Le Monde diplomatique Dec. 1997; Le Monde 6 Nov. 1997). The security forces have been revamped (Country Reports 1997 1998, Introduction) and some members of the former Zairian Armed Forces (Forces armées zaïroises—FAZ) have been incorporated into the new Congolese Armed Forces after spending time in reeducation camps (AFP 27 July 1997; Le Monde diplomatique Dec. 1997); others, however, have reportedly never returned from these camps (De Financieel-Economische Tijd 19 Nov. 1997; UNHCR 5 Jan. 1998, para. 15.5). Misconduct on the part of soldiers is less frequent than it was under the former regime (HRW Dec. 1997, 16; VSV 26 Feb. 1998; AZADHO 26 Feb. 1998). However, according to *Le Monde*, although people are safer than before (*Le Monde* 6 Nov. 1997), the security forces still do not hesitate to use their arms, even against civilians (*Le Monde diplomatique* Dec. 1997; AZADHO 25 July 1997; AZADHO 28 Jan. 1998). In fact, some observers believe that a climate of insecurity is starting to take hold of the entire country (*Info-CongoKinshasa* 12 Sept. 1997c; AZADHO 28 Jan. 1998; United Nations 17 Oct. 1997, para. 126).

Several sources indicate that a large part of the country is under military rule (The Economist 12 July 1997; United Nations 17 Oct. 1997, para. 125c). The authorities have created security services whose operations are sometimes reminiscent of the actions of the former regime (Info-CongoKinshasa 14 Nov. 1997a, 2-3; AZADHO 28 Jan. 1998; see also Le Monde diplomatique Dec. 1997). These security services, and particularly the National Intelligence Agency (Agence nationale de renseignement

—ANR), are feared not only because they arbitrarily arrest people but also because of their brutality (Info-CongoKinshasa 14 Nov. 1997a, 2-3; AZADHO 19 Jan. 1998). According to Info-CongoKinshasa, the Military Detention for Unpatriotic Activities (Détection militaire pour des activités anti-patrie, or DEMIAP) is scarcely distinguishable from the former Military Intelligence and Action Service (Service d'action et de renseignements militaires, or SARM), having inherited the latter's offices and prisons as well as a number of its agents (14 Nov. 1997a, 2). Human rights organizations indicate that the security services inflict [translation] "inhuman and degrading treatment" and "acts of torture" on detainees (AZADHO 19 Jan. 1998; see also VSV 10 Sept. 1997).

The months following the new regime's takeover saw tensions develop in the army between those who had joined the AFDL at the start of the rebellion (primarily Tutsis) and the soldiers who had joined the AFDL forces later on; the latter group includes Katangan soldiers, ex-FAZ members and new recruits (Info-CongoKinshasa 11 Aug. 1997b, 3; IMC Oct. 1997). Rivalry among various factions has sometimes led to fighting (Info-CongoKinshasa 12 Sept. 1997c, 2; *Africa News* 28 Nov. 1997; IMC Oct. 1997). For example, a number of sources believe that such rivalries were behind the November 1997 shooting deaths of soldiers in Kinshasa that occurred after the arrest of the president's special security adviser, General Masasu Nindaga ^[1] (*Africa News* 28 Nov. 1997; AFP 29 Nov. 1997; AP 29 Nov. 1997). However, according to AFP, authorities claim that armed bandits or quarreling soldiers were responsible for the shootings (29 Nov. 1997). Some AFDL officials are also reportedly engaged in settling scores (VSV 15 Sept. 1997; *Info-CongoKinshasa* 12 Sept. 1997c, 2) and summarily execute people; some of the victims are citizens who have committed ordinary crimes, but others are killed for political purposes or for reasons that remain unclear (ibid., 2-3; United Nations 17 Oct. 1997, para. 133 et 135; HRW Dec. 1997, 19). In October 1997, *Info-CongoKinshasa* reported that not a night passed without some people being killed by soldiers (17 Oct. 1997b, 4). Nevertheless, *Country Reports 1997* states that this kind of killing is less frequent than it was during Mobutu's reign, especially in Kinshasa (1998, section 1a; see also AZADHO 26 Feb. 1998). According to AFP, Kabila has stated his intention of cracking down on undisciplined army elements (3 Dec. 1997c), and strong measures have reportedly already been implemented (HRW Dec. 1997, 17), including the disarming of soldiers in the country's major towns and cities (VSV 26 Feb. 1998).

The new regime has created a military court (Cour d'ordre militaire) that is mandated to hear not only cases involving security force members but also crimes involving the use of a weapon (AZADHO 19 Jan. 1998; Info-CongoKinshasa 26 Jan. 1998c; *La Tempête des tropiques* 27 Jan. 1998); the military court has reportedly already ordered at least 21 civilians executed for such crimes (AP 28 Jan. 1998; AZADHO 1998a; AFP 27 Jan. 1998a). In practice, the military court is known to overstep its mandate by also trying the cases of political opponents charged with endangering the security of the state (AZADHO 19 Jan. 1998; Info-CongoKinshasa 26 Jan. 1998c; *Le Soir* 6 Feb. 1998; *La Tempête des tropiques* 27 Jan. 1998).

NOTE

[1] The president's special security adviser, Commander Masasu Nindaga (known as "General Masasu"), was arrested on Kabila's orders on 25 November 1997, shortly after returning from a visit to the eastern part of the country; several charges were brought against him, including [translation] "secret dealings with foreign countries" and drug trafficking (AFP 3 Dec. 1997b; Info-CongoKinshasa 19 Dec. 1997a, 2; *Country Reports 1997 1998*, section 1d). Kabila apparently believed that Masasu was preparing to stage a coup (DPA 28 Nov. 1997; see also *Jeune Afrique* 16 Dec. 1997-5 Jan. 1998, 42). Masasu Nindaga was one of the founders of the AFDL (ibid., 41; DPA 28 Nov. 1997). He had been very close to Kabila and played a key role in the rebellion against the former regime (ibid.; RFI 26 Nov. 1997b). According to AFP, Masasu's brother Justin Nindaga has been sentenced to 20 years of forced labour for inciting soldiers in Bukavu to rebel the day after General Masasu's arrest (28 Jan. 1998; *Radio-Télévision nationales congolaises* 28 Dec. 1997). [\[back\]](#)

3. TREATMENT OF SELECTED GROUPS BY THE AUTHORITIES

According to Human Rights Watch, people whose fundamental rights have been infringed upon or whose activism makes them a target of threats such as those described in this paper cannot expect to obtain the protection of the state through the courts, given the lack of independence of the justice system (Dec. 1997, 19). The Human Rights Association of Congo-Kinshasa (AZADHO) and Voice of the Voiceless for Human Rights (VSV) report that although these people can freely move about the country and settle elsewhere, they cannot resume their activist work without once again placing themselves at risk (AZADHO 27 Feb. 1998; VSV 26 Feb. 1998). Human Rights Watch reports that the authorities have placed serious restrictions on the freedom of movement of personalities in the political and human rights arenas (Dec. 1997, 36).

3.1 Civil and Military Officials of the Mobutu Regime

After taking over power, the new Congolese authorities arrested officials of the former regime accused of embezzlement; however the arrests were characterized by irregularities (AFP 4 July 1997; Info-CongoKinshasa 11 Aug. 1997c, 3; La Presse 28 Aug. 1997, B3). The appropriate legal procedures were not applied (Info-CongoKinshasa 11 Aug. 1997c, 3): the arrests were carried out without warrant and those arrested were not brought before a judge within 48 hours of their arrest (HRW Dec. 1997, 18). AFDL soldiers reportedly confiscated cars, houses and other belongings of the arrested officials and illegally kept them for their personal use or distributed them to AFDL officials (AFP 4 July 1997; Info-CongoKinshasa 11 Aug. 1997a, 1; *ibid.* 1997c, 3; Jeune Afrique 9-15 Dec. 1997, 8). The government has criticized AFDL soldiers for their [translation] "'anarchic' confiscation of former officials' belongings," and has ordered all confiscations to be carried out in compliance with proper legal procedures (AFP 23 July 1997; Africa Confidential 1 Aug. 1997, 6); five dishonest inspectors have been sanctioned (Jeune Afrique 9-15 Dec. 1997, 8). However, according to AZADHO, the authorities are showing too much leniency by refusing to prosecute those responsible for such abuses (28 Jan. 1998; AFP 16 Nov. 1997).

The officials of the former regime that were arrested include a former Zairian national bank governor, his deputy, ex-FAZ generals, the secretary general of the Popular Movement for the Revolution (Mouvement populaire de la révolution, or MPR, the only party that existed under Mobutu's regime), a former CEO of a water distribution company and a number of former ministers (AFP 4 July 1997; Jeune Afrique 9-15 Dec. 1997, 7). Altogether, about 40 former officials were arrested (Info-CongoKinshasa 12 Sept. 1997a, 1; AFP 19 Feb. 1998; Jeune Afrique 9-15 Dec. 1997, 8). A United Nations report states that these arrests were discriminatory in the sense that former officials from Kabila's Shaba region were not arrested (28 Aug. 1997; also AZADHO 26 Feb. 1998). An AZADHO spokesperson said that only one former official from Shaba had been arrested, while another, a former governor of Zaire's Central Bank, had turned himself in to the authorities at Kabila's request (*ibid.*).

Several human rights organizations condemned what they considered to be the appalling conditions in which the former officials were being detained, and particularly criticized the lack of beds and sanitary facilities (La Presse 28 Aug. 1997, B3; Info-CongoKinshasa 12 Sept. 1997a, 1). In late January 1998, it was reported that three former officials—Air Zaire CEO Kikunda Ombala, the REGIDESCO water distribution corporation CEO Tshiongo Tshibinkubula wa Tumba, and former Central Bank governor Patrice Djamboleka—had been released provisionally after paying a fine (AFP 27 Jan. 1998b; AZADHO 28 Jan. 1998). Shortly after, 26 other officials were also released provisionally after paying a sum of money equal in value to the property they had allegedly misappropriated under the previous regime (AFP 19 Feb. 1998; AZADHO 26 Feb. 1998). The BBC reports the Congolese

authorities as saying that 16 former officials had been released provisionally (19 Feb. 1998). Fifteen of those freed are reportedly under house arrest (AZADHO 26 Feb. 1998). An AZADHO representative states that the payment of money by the prisoners for their release was not bail, but rather the result of an agreement between the officials and Kabila whereby all legal proceedings against the accused would be dropped (*ibid.*). About half a dozen former officials are still behind bars (*ibid.*). Only Kikunda Ombala was scheduled for trial, but the hearings were suspended until March 1998 (AFP 19 Feb. 1998; BBC 19 Feb. 1998) and may well not resume at all due to lack of evidence (AZADHO 26 Feb. 1998).

The Kinshasa press has reportedly published articles on ex-FAZ soldiers' complaints of ill-treatment by AFDL soldiers (AFP 27 July 1997). AFP has reported that according to information obtained by AZADHO, seven soldiers of the former regime were arrested by members of the new Congolese army in October 1997 and held in detention without being informed of the reasons for their arrest (3 Nov. 1997). AZADHO adds that 223 other soldiers were [translation] "being held in the Makala penitentiary and reeducation centre" (AFP 3 Nov. 1997). Ex-FAZ soldiers are reportedly subjected to ill-treatment both in detention facilities (AP 2 Jan. 1998) and in the Kitona reeducation camp (AFP 3 Nov. 1997; *Le Soir* 6 Feb. 1998; *De Financieel-Economische Tijd* 19 Nov. 1997a). Of the 37,000 soldiers sent to the camp (*ibid.*), at least 4,000 soldiers reportedly died there (*ibid.*; *Africa Analysis* 28 Nov. 1997), while 7,000 others ran away (*De Financieel-Economische Tijd* 19 Nov. 1997a). Some have joined resistance movements (*ibid.*; *Africa Confidential* 20 Feb. 1998, 5) while others live secretly with their parents, as they are considered to be deserters and could be executed (*De Financieel-Economische Tijd* 19 Nov. 1997a).

According to AZADHO and UNHCR, people belonging to Mobutu's Ngbandi ethnic group as well as those from *Équateur* are not systematically harassed by the Congolese authorities unless they had close ties to Mobutu or played a prominent role in the former regime (e.g., as a member of the government, a senior officer of a state corporation or a senior civil servant) (AZADHO 27 Feb. 1998; UNHCR 5 Jan. 1998, para. 16.1).

3.2 Human Rights Activists

Several sources report that the new Congolese regime has little tolerance for human rights activists (UNHCR 5 Jan. 1998, para. 17; *Info-CongoKinshasa* 11 Aug. 1997a, 1; *Le Devoir* 2 Sept. 1997, A5; AFP 15 Nov. 1997). The authorities reportedly try to denigrate human rights organizations (AFP 3 Dec. 1997a; AI 3 Dec. 1997, 31) in addition to criticizing individual activists (AZADHO 28 Jan. 1998). Those who are the most active or who criticize the government may be summoned for interrogation, may receive a visit from the security services or be arrested, as the following examples illustrate (AZADHO 26 Feb. 1998; VSV 26 Feb. 1998).

AZADHO has been in the AFDL's "bad books" ever since it accused the AFDL of committing massive human rights violations during the rebellion (AZADHO 22 Jan. 1998; FIDH 3-10 July 1997, 15). The more active members of AZADHO have encountered obstacles to their activities such as interrogations by the security services (AZADHO 22 Jan. 1998; FIDH 3-10 July 1997; AI 3 Dec. 1997, 31; United Nations 17 Oct. 1997, para. 186). Faced with serious death threats, some AZADHO leaders such as Guillaume Ngefa, José Ndjemoti and Benjamin Lukamba were forced into exile abroad (FIDH 3-10 July 1997, 16; AZADHO 22 Jan. 1998; United Nations 17 Oct. 1997, para. 186).

A number of human rights activists were arrested in the eastern part of the country in August and September 1997; two of them, members of the local organization representing the Regional Council of Non-Governmental Organizations (*Conseil régional des organisations non gouvernementales*, or CRONGD) in Maniema province, were reportedly tortured (*Le Devoir* 2 Sept. 1997; AI 3 Dec. 1997,

31; United Nations 17 Oct. 1997, para. 144). According to AZADHO, the situation of AZADHO, CRONGD and Haki Za Binadamu [2] activists in Maniema province was becoming more and more disturbing due to the "systematic repression" that they faced (United Nations 28 Aug. 1997; FIDHOMCT 28 Aug. 1997; see also Info-CongoKinshasa 12 Sept. 1997b, 2). The regime was apparently trying to intimidate local authorities and prevent them from providing any information to the UN mission charged with investigating the massacres in the eastern part of the country [3] (Le Devoir 2 Sept. 1997, A5; AFP 3 Sept. 1997). AZADHO was forced to shut down its Maniema office (AZADHO 28 Jan. 1998).

Early in November 1997, soldiers entered the Kinshasa offices of VSV without a warrant and evicted the occupants (Info-CongoKinshasa 14 Nov. 1997c, 5; AFP 15 Nov. 1997). Info-CongoKinshasa explains that an individual with close ties to the regime had asked the soldiers to clear the building even though the court case concerning the ownership of the building had not yet been resolved (14 Nov. 1997c, 5).

On 21 November 1997, men [translation] "claiming to belong to the 'Presidential Security Service' systematically searched the offices" of the Human Rights Observers Committee (Comité des observateurs des droits de l'homme, or CODHO), and forced its president, N'sii Luanda Shandwe, to take flight and remain underground (FIDH 13 Nov.-4 Dec. 1997, 50; Info-CongoKinshasa 19 Dec. 1997b, 4; AI 27 Nov. 1997).

Two days later, the secretary general of the National Human Rights Centre (Centre national pour les droits de l'homme, or CENADHO), Roger Sala Nzo Badila, was arrested at his Kinshasa residence where security service inspectors, accompanied by soldiers, confiscated various documents in the course of an exhaustive search (ibid.; FIDH 13 Nov.- 4 Dec. 1997, 49; Info-CongoKinshasa 19 Dec. 1997b, 3-4; IPS 10 Dec. 1997). His arrest is reportedly linked to the publication of a document dealing with human rights in the DRC since the AFDL takeover (ibid.; Country Reports 1997 1998, section 1d; AI 27 Nov. 1997; AZADHO 26 Feb. 1998). The authorities accused him of treason and undermining state security; documents confiscated at his office had shown that CENADHO was receiving financial aid from a Dutch organization (ibid.). The security forces had apparently threatened and detained Roger Sala on other occasions as well (Info-CongoKinshasa 19 Dec. 1997b, 3-4; AI 27 Nov. 1997), forcing him to go underground for several weeks (Info-CongoKinshasa 19 Dec. 1997b, 4; FIDH 13 Nov.-4 Dec. 1997, 49). In early 1998, he was still awaiting his trial (AZADHO 26 Feb. 1998; ibid. 26 Jan. 1998; AI 6 Jan. 1998; HRW 18 Feb. 1998). Sala and CENADHO president Nyabirungu Mwene Songa were both released provisionally in mid-February (HRW 18 Feb. 1998; AZADHO 26 Feb. 1998; VSV 26 Feb. 1998).

On 13 March 1998, members of the ANR, acting on orders from the Congolese authorities, raided the Kinshasa printing house Kin Press and confiscated more than 1,600 copies of the 1997 AZADHO annual report, along with a number of printing plates (VSV 14 Mar. 1998; Reuters n.d.).

During the night of 20 March 1998, VSV president Floribert Chebeya was attacked at his residence by a [translation] "group of four soldiers and a civilian" who threatened to kill him (AZADHO 27 Mar. 1998; FIDHOMCT 27 Mar. 1998; *Libération* 1 Apr. 1998, 10).

On 3 April 1998, Justice Minister Mwenze Kongolo accused AZADHO of waging [translation] "political campaigns" and stated that the government was officially disbanding the organization, which is henceforth [translation] "completely banned throughout the country" (AFP 3 Apr. 1998; *Le Soir* 6 Apr. 1998; AZADHO 6 Apr. 1998). The minister added that all human rights organizations in the DRC had to register with the Congolese authorities within three days or face the same consequences that had

befallen AZADHO (AFP 3 Apr. 1998; *Le Soir* 6 Apr. 1998).

3.3 Political Opponents

After Kabila came to power, all non-AFDL demonstrations were banned (The Economist 12 July 1997; Country Reports 1997 1998, section 2b). The authorities have warned the public that those who violate this ban would be [translation] "severely punished" (VSV 26 Feb. 1998; AFP 13 Feb. 1998c). The security forces have not hesitated to use force to enforce the ban and disperse all unauthorized gatherings (The Economist 12 July 1997; Country Reports 1997 1998, section 2b; *Libération* 12 Aug. 1997, 6). According to Country Reports, the security forces' violent interventions are due more to their inexperience in dealing with demonstrations than to any deliberate policy dictated by the authorities (1998, section 2b). Country Reports adds that nothing has so far prevented opposition party leaders from "conduct[ing] small, private meetings" (*ibid.*), although other sources have reported on the disruption of a 25 November 1997 meeting at the home of the Forces of the Future (Forces du futur) president (The New York Times 8 Dec. 1997; AFP 25 Nov. 1997; Info-CongoKinshasa 19 Dec. 1997b, 3). According to Human Rights Watch, political groups such as the Patriotic Front (Front patriotique), the Social Christian Democratic Party (Parti démocrate social chrétien) and the Union of Independent Federalists and Republicans (Union des fédéralistes et des républicains indépendants, or UFERI) that have not openly criticized the AFDL have not been harassed by the authorities (HRW Dec. 97, 22).

On 25 July 1997, security forces forcibly dispersed a peaceful demonstration by the Unified Lumumbist Party (Parti lumumbiste unifié, or PALU) and several activists belonging to the Union for Democracy and Social Progress (Union pour la démocratie et le progrès social, or UDPS) (AFP 27 July 1997; AFP 28 July 1997; Africa Confidential 1 Aug. 1997, 5; AI 3 Dec. 1997, 26). Sources differ as to the result of this intervention. *Le Devoir* cites a preliminary report provided by PALU that mentions [translation] "one person dead, 10 people shot and wounded, 123 people wounded by various means, and 54 people detained" (29 July 1997). AZADHO reports four deaths, four people seriously injured and several arrests (Info-CongoKinshasa 11 Aug. 1997c, 3; AZADHO 26 July 1997). Amnesty International reports one death, six people seriously injured and about 130 arrests (3 Dec. 1997, 26). The Congolese authorities have denied that there were any deaths at all (*Le Devoir* 29 July 1997, A5; Africa Confidential 1 Aug. 1997, 5-6). According to two sources, several demonstrators were beaten in detention; some were detained for only a few hours, while others were held for several days (Country Reports 1997 1998, section 1d; AI 3 Dec. 1997, 26). Following the demonstration, President Kabila issued a reminder about the ban on political party activities and stated that he would tolerate no disruptive activities by political opponents; he added that those who attempted to defy the ban would be held responsible for the consequences (AFP 27 July 1997; AFP 28 July 1997; Info-CongoKinshasa 11 Aug. 1997c, 3).

The security forces have also prevented other demonstrations from being held (Info-CongoKinshasa 12 Sept. 1997a, 1; *Business Day* 19 Jan. 1998), and a demonstration that did take place on 15 August 1997 in Kinshasa resulted in about 50 young UDPS activists being arrested; the demonstrators were marking the anniversary of UDPS chief Étienne Tshisekedi's election to the post of prime minister by the Sovereign National Conference (Conférence nationale souveraine) (Info-CongoKinshasa 12 Sept. 1997a, 1; *Le Soir* 16 Sept. 1997; AFP 28 Sept. 1997). Two of those arrested had to be taken to a medical facility while in detention (*Le Soir* 16 Sept. 1997; AI 3 Dec. 1997, 28). The other activists were held in detention until 14 October 1997 without any charges being brought against them; during that time they were reportedly beaten and tortured (*ibid.*; VSV 22 Oct. 1997; Country Reports 1997 1998, section 1d; HRW Dec. 97, 34-35).

The president of Innovative Forces for Unity and Solidarity (Forces novatrices pour l'unité et la

solidarité, or FONUS), Joseph Olenghankoy, was taken into custody by armed elements of the AFDL on 8 September 1997 and held for 24 hours, during which time he was interrogated at length (AFP 9 Sept. 1997a; Info-CongoKinshasa 12 Sept. 1997a, 1; AI 3 Dec. 1997, 30; see also Jeune Afrique 16 Dec. 1997-5 Jan. 1998, 43). The authorities accused him of seeking to destabilize the country by making statements that were actually calls for a strike (VSV 15 Sept. 1997; AFP 9 Sept. 1997a). Olenghankoy was arrested again on 10 October 1997 and released without explanation a day later; while he was in custody, the security forces confiscated the contents of his residence (AFP 11 Oct. 1997; AI 3 Dec. 1997, 29-30). The authorities claimed to have found weapons of war in his house and, after releasing him, accused him of having recruited 40,000 youths in order to provide them with military training (AFP 17 Oct. 1997; AI 3 Dec. 1997, 30; Africa Research Bulletin 1-31 Oct. 1997, 8). Olenghankoy lodged a complaint against the minister and deputy minister of Internal Affairs to protest against his arrest, the injuries that he had suffered and the confiscation of his belongings (AFP 17 Oct. 1997; HRW Dec. 1997, 26). He was arrested once again around 20 January 1998 (AFP 20 Jan. 1998; Info-CongoKinshasa 26 Jan. 1998a; JIGL 29 Jan. 1998) and transferred some 10 days later to Lubumbashi, where government leaders were meeting (Le Soir 3 Feb. 1998; VSV 31 Jan. 98; Africa Analysis 6 Feb. 1998, 2). As of late February 1998, he was still in custody, charged with [translation] "undermining state security" (AZADHO 27 Feb. 1998).

UDPS national secretary Mathieu Kalele, considered by the authorities to be a traitor to the nation because of his articles denouncing the dubious practices of certain leaders, was arrested by the DEMIAP on 24 October 1997 and charged with [translation] "undermining state security," he was reportedly detained in appalling conditions (AFP 23 Jan. 1998; Info-CongoKinshasa 14 Nov. 1997a, 2; AZADHO 19 Jan. 1998; RFI 25 Jan. 1998). A military court sentenced Kalele and fellow UDPS member Jean-François Kabanda to two years in prison for [translation] "spreading false rumours" (AZADHO 26 Jan. 1998; AFP 23 Jan. 1998; RFI 25 Jan. 1998; Info-CongoKinshasa 26 Jan. 1998c).

Another UDPS activist was arrested on 22 November 1997 by police sent to prevent a public meeting of the radical opposition from taking place (AFP 22 Nov. 1997; Africa No. 1 23 Nov. 1997). The sources consulted by the Research Directorate provide no additional information on the status of the activist.

On 25 November 1997, police arrested Arthur Z'ahidi Ngoma, president of the Forces of the Future (Forces du futur) political movement, along with the other activists and journalists attending a meeting at his home; they were all taken to a prison and whipped (The New York Times 8 Dec. 1997; AFP 25 Nov. 1997; Info-CongoKinshasa 19 Dec. 1997b, 3). The journalists and most of the activists were reportedly released the same evening or within a few days (The New York Times 8 Dec. 1997; AFP 25 Nov. 1997; Info-CongoKinshasa 19 Dec. 1997b, 3; IPS 10 Dec. 1997; HRW Dec. 1997, 27). Ngoma himself remained behind bars in disturbing conditions (The New York Times 8 Dec. 1997; RFI 2 Dec. 1997). He was transferred to Lubumbashi in late January or early February 1998 along with Joseph Olenghankoy (Le Soir 3 Feb. 1998; VSV 31 Jan. 1998; HRW 18 Feb. 1998; Africa Analysis 6 Feb. 1998, 2; AZADHO 27 Feb. 1998). Like the FONUS leader, Ngoma is charged with undermining state security (ibid.).

On 17 January 1998, the security forces broke up a UDPS gathering (Info-CongoKinshasa 26 Jan. 1998a; AZADHO 26 Jan. 1998; AFP 17 Jan. 1998; see also Business Day 19 Jan. 1998). According to AZADHO, about 15 activists arrested during that operation were reportedly tortured with electric truncheons (AZADHO 26 Jan. 1998). Business Day however mentions the arrests of only four activists (19 Jan. 1998). An AZADHO representative stated on 27 February 1998 that all the activists had been released.

Athanase Oyumbu and Paul Kasongo, two FONUS officials, were arrested in late January 1998 in front of the UDPS secretary general's residence (AZADHO Jan. 1998b; see also VSV 15 Feb. 1998); they were accused of undermining state security (AZADHO 27 Feb. 1998). According to AZADHO, both were released but Oyumbu was later arrested once again (*ibid.*).

The most prominent opposition politician, UDPS head Étienne Tshisekedi, was arrested at his residence on 12 February 1998 (AFP 13 Feb. 1998a; PANA 13 Feb. 1998; VSV 15 Feb. 1998). The UDPS had planned to celebrate its 16th anniversary on the weekend of 14 February 1998 (AFP 13 Feb. 1998a; PANA 13 Feb. 1998). The authorities announced that they had exiled Tshisekedi to Kasai, his native region, for having defied the ban on political party activities and in order [translation] "'to put an end to his irresponsible and dangerous intrigues'" (*Libération* 14-15 Feb. 1998; see also AP 13 Feb. 1998). He is reportedly still there (AZADHO 26 Feb. 1998; *Le Soir* 2 Apr. 1998; *Libération* 1 Apr. 1998, 10).

VSV reports that in a police raid on UDPS headquarters on 13 March 1998, five party members who worked for UDPS secretary general Adrien Phongo were manhandled and taken away to an unknown destination. In addition, the premises were searched and a number of items were confiscated (14 March 1998).

3.4 Journalists

Since the AFDL takeover in May 1997, there have been reports of journalists being arrested as well as numerous cases of attacks against the press by the Congolese authorities (AFP 3 Dec. 1997a; *Le Soir* 16 Sept. 1997; VSV 26 Feb. 1998). The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has stated that only journalists involved in political or human rights activities are harassed by the new regime (UNHCR 5 Jan. 1998, para. 17). In January 1998, the Information Minister warned the press that the authorities would not hesitate to crack down on those responsible for [translation] "'insults, slanderous reports, and even the dissemination of false and seditious information'" (*Info-CongoKinshasa* 26 Jan. 1998a; VSV 26 Feb. 1998). In the preceding months, as detailed in the following examples, the authorities had arrested several journalists for having published allegedly false news (*ibid.*; *Info-CongoKinshasa* 26 Jan. 1998a).

In late July, the Congolese authorities arrested the editor of the newspaper *La Référence Plus*, André Ipakala, and interrogated him about an article on dissension within AFDL ranks; Ipakala was released the next day (AFP 18 July 1997; *La Lettre de Reporters sans frontières* 6 Oct. 1997; *Info-CongoKinshasa* 11 Aug. 1997c, 3; HRW Dec. 1997, 38-39).

On 28 July 1997 or thereabouts, a short time after the publication of a report that the Finance Minister had been placed under house arrest for embezzlement, Ali Kalonga, the director of the Congolese Press Agency, was arrested by police (AFP 3 Aug. 1997; *La Lettre de Reporters sans frontières* 6 Oct. 1997; *Info-CongoKinshasa* 11 Aug. 1997e, 5). The Congolese government claimed that the information in the report was incorrect (AFP 3 Aug. 1997; *Africa Confidential* 1 Aug. 1997). Kalonga was released two weeks later (AFP 12 Aug. 1997; *La Lettre de Reporters sans frontières* 6 Oct. 1997; RFI 13 Aug. 1997).

On 8 September 1997, the editor of the daily newspaper *Le Phare*, Polydor Muboyayi, was arrested following the publication of a report that President Kabila was planning to create his own presidential guard (AFP 9 Sept. 1997b; *Info-CongoKinshasa* 12 Sept. 1997a, 1; *Le Soir* 16 Sept. 1997; *La Lettre de Reporters sans frontières* 6 Oct. 1997). The arrest was reportedly marked by serious irregularities: contrary to the law on the press, the authorities did not avail themselves of the

opportunity they had to publish a rebuttal and they arrested the editor of the paper even though they knew the identity of the article's author (AFP 9 Sept. 1997b; AZADHO 12 Sept. 1997). Responding to a call by a journalists' union to stage a protest against this attack on the press, the Kinshasa press published no newspapers on 18 September 1997 (Info-CongoKinshasa 17 Oct. 1997a, 3; AFP 18 Sept. 1997a; HRW Dec. 1997, 39). After spending more than two months in detention, Muboyayi was released in late November 1997, on the orders of President Kabila (ibid.; AFP 18 Nov. 1997; Country Reports 1997 1998, section 2a; *Africa News* 2 Dec. 1997).

Michel Luya, the editor of *Le Palmarès* newspaper, was arrested by the authorities on 28 September 1997 for [translation] "purposes of investigation" and released on 3 October 1997 (AFP 3 Oct. 1997; Info-CongoKinshasa 17 Oct. 1997a, 3; Country Reports 1997 1998, section 2a). Luya was not informed of the reason for his arrest (ibid.; AFP 3 Oct. 1997).

The managing editor of the Congolese newspapers *Mambenga*, *Essor Africain* and *L'Alarme*, Bonsange Yema, was arrested on 18 November 1997 on accusations of having provided information to the UN investigative mission (AFP 24 Nov. 1997; Info-CongoKinshasa 19 Dec. 1997b, 3; HRW Dec. 1997, 39). The Kinshasa newspaper *Le Phare* reported his release on 27 November 1997 (AFP 27 Nov. 1997; HRW Dec. 1997, 39). He was reportedly arrested again around 7 February 1998 following the publication of a press release calling for FONUS president Joseph Olenghankoy to be freed (IFEX 12 Feb. 1998; AFP 9 Feb. 1998). The authorities also arrested eight members of Yema's family (ibid.), but released them a short while later (AZADHO 27 Feb. 1998).

About 10 journalists were taken into custody on 25 November 1997 in a bar near the residence of Forces of the Future president Arthur Z'ahidi Ngoma, who had just been arrested (see Section 3.3 above); they were taken to a police station and whipped before being released (AFP 25 Nov. 1997; RFI 26 Nov. 1997a; *Africa News* 2 Dec. 1997).

AFP reports that on 30 November 1997 the security services confiscated a thousand copies of the international edition of the newspaper *Le Soft*, edited by Kinkiey Mulumba, a former Information Minister under the Mobutu regime (AFP 4 Dec. 1997; AZADHO 27 Feb. 1998). The confiscated edition contained an article stating that Kabila would not be able to convince friends of the DRC to inject funds into the country (AFP 4 Dec. 1997). AZADHO considers this to be an isolated incident (27 Feb. 1998). However, AFP reports that *Le Soft* has been the target of two other similar incidents (24 Feb. 1998).

The offices of the daily newspaper *Elima* were completely ransacked on 22 December 1997 after having been occupied by soldiers for two months; no explanation was given by the soldiers for this action (AFP 27 Dec. 1997; Info-CongoKinshasa 26 Jan. 1998a; IFEX 29 Dec. 1997).

Pontien Tshisungu, a journalist with the state radio and television corporation, has been in detention since his arrest in December 1997 following the broadcast of a report that there had been an unsuccessful attack against the Interior Minister during his visit to North Kivu (IFEX 23 Dec. 1997; Info-CongoKinshasa 26 Jan. 1998a; AFP 22 Dec. 1997). The minister denied the report (AFP 22 Dec. 1997). AZADHO did not have any recent information concerning the journalist's fate (27 Feb. 1998).

The editor of the newspaper *Le Potentiel*, Modeste Lutinga, was arrested by the authorities on 25 February 1998, a few days after the publication of an article claiming that some of Kabila's close associates from his home province of Kasai were concerned by the government's decision to exile Tshisekedi to his native region (AFP 26 Feb. 1998; United Nations 26 Feb. 1998). Lutinga was released on 28 February 1998 (AFP 1 Mar. 1998; United Nations 2 Mar. 1998).

3.5 Other Groups

A member of the clergy was placed under strict surveillance by the security forces (AZADHO 28 Jan. 1998). The clergyman, Protestant pastor Théodore Ngoy, was arrested in early December 1997 for comparing the current authorities' actions to those of the Mobutu regime (AFP 9 Dec. 1997; Info-CongoKinshasa 19 Dec. 1997b, 4; AZADHO 19 Jan. 1998; *Africa News* 15 Dec. 1997). As of late February 1998, he was still behind bars but had not been charged (AZADHO 26 Feb. 1998; see also *Country Reports 1997 1998*, section 2c).

In another incident, 200-400 Katangan soldiers were imprisoned; sources consulted offer differing explanations of this action (PANA 18 Nov. 1997; *New African* Dec. 1997; *De Financieel-Economische Tijd* 19 Nov. 1997b). According to PANA, the soldiers were jailed because they had demanded autonomy for Katanga (18 Nov. 1997), but *De Financieel-Economische Tijd* states that they were just asking to be paid their wages (19 Nov. 1997b). *New African* suggests that the arrests were triggered by the fact that the Katangan chief of staff, General Mulanda, had prevented Rwandan soldiers from killing fleeing Hutu refugees (Dec. 1997). General Mulanda was arrested in May 1997 and taken to a prison in Lubumbashi (PANA 18 Nov. 1997; *La Libre Belgique* 27 Sept. 1997; *New African* Dec. 1997). They were all reportedly released in September 1997 (*Africa Confidential* 20 Feb. 1998, 5; AZADHO 27 Feb. 1998).

According to Amnesty International, students suspected of being ardent supporters of the opposition are at risk of being arrested and ill-treated (AI 3 Dec. 1997, 29). AZADHO and VSV representatives add that students no longer organize activities or at least do so discreetly since learning that some fellow students were reporting on them to the authorities (AZADHO 26 Feb. 1998; VSV 26 Feb. 1998).

AFP reports that AZADHO has learned of several cases where students were shot dead by soldiers (AFP 26 Sept. 1997). A few days after a student at the Institut pédagogique national (the national teachers' college) was killed on 26 August 1997, [translation] "about 20 students on an outing [...] drowned in a swimming pool when they were thrown into a panic by AFDL soldiers firing shots in the air"; the exact circumstances surrounding this incident have not been established (*ibid.*; also Info-CongoKinshasa 12 Sept. 1997c, 3; PANA 2 Sept. 1997).

About 10 Lubumbashi University students were arrested for organizing demonstrations on 11 and 12 August 1997 to protest against the killing of a fellow student by soldiers; they were held in detention without due process being followed (AFP 18 Sept. 1997b; *Country Reports 1997 1998*, section 1d). They were released in mid-October 1997 (*Country Reports 1997 1998*, section 1d; VSV 26 Feb. 1998; HRW Dec. 1997, 32).

One of the Health Minister's guards was sentenced to death by a military court on 25 September 1997 for shooting and killing two students taking part in a meeting at a college located near the minister's residence (AFP 25 Sept. 1997; AFP 26 Sept. 1997; Info-CongoKinshasa 17 Oct. 1997b; AI 3 Dec. 1997, 32). Amnesty International has expressed concern at the undue haste with which the case was handled by the military court (*ibid.*).

In late January 1998, the Congolese authorities arrested several prominent personalities in South Kivu, including several customary chiefs and academics accused of supporting the Mai-Mai warriors; these people, who were arrested in Bukavu, were then transferred to a detention centre in Kinshasa (*Le Soir* 2 Feb. 1998; AZADHO 1998b; RFI 31 Jan. 1998; *La Tempête des tropiques* 5 Feb. 1998).

Congolese who fled Zaire during the AFDL-led rebellion have reportedly experienced no difficulties in returning to their homes when they came back to the country; this is true in particular of the

Congolese who had found refuge in Brazzaville or Tanzania (AZADHO 27 Feb. 1998; AFP 13 Feb. 1998b; *Africa News* 22 Dec. 1997). However, according to AZADHO, those who publicly criticize the current regime while they are abroad cannot return to the country without running the risk of being arrested (AZADHO 27 Feb. 1998).

NOTES

[2] A non-governmental organization whose name means "The Justice of Victims" (FIDHOMCT 28 Aug. 1997). Its goal is the defence of Maniema's rights (Info-CongoKinshasa 12 Sept. 1997b, 2). [\[back\]](#)

[3] This UN commission was tasked in the summer of 1997 with investigating the disappearance of some 20,000 Rwandan refugees in the former Zaire between October 1996 and May 1997 (*Libération* 20 Feb. 1998; *Le Monde* 14 Feb. 1998). Numerous restrictions imposed by the Congolese authorities prevented the Commission from starting its work as scheduled (*ibid.*). The obstacles were finally removed and the Commission started its investigation on 12 February 1998 (*ibid.*). [\[back\]](#)

4. SITUATION IN THE EASTERN PART OF THE COUNTRY

AFP reports that Lawyers Without Borders has expressed its concern over the deterioration of the human rights situation in the eastern part of the country since the creation of the UN investigative commission; it is particularly worried by "the situation of human rights activists, aid workers and journalists in the east of the country" (24 Nov. 1997). The organization called for an end to "the totalitarian drift in political, administrative officials" in the eastern part of the country (*ibid.*).

The eastern part of the country continues to be subject to the ethnic tensions that have been a fixture in the region for the past several years (The Washington Post 10 Oct. 1997; HRWFIDH Oct. 1997, 32; AZADHO 4 Sept. 1997). Violence reportedly flared up anew in July 1997 in North and South Kivu when the new regime appointed Tutsis to the top posts in the local administration (AFP 5 Sept. 1997; *Courrier international* 11-17 Sept. 1997; AZADHO 4 Sept. 1997). Although Tutsis are a minority within the AFDL, many of them played leading roles in the struggle to topple Mobutu and, after the AFDL's victory, they were rewarded with appointments to high-ranking positions, a fact that aroused the envy and resentment of the other ethnic groups (The Washington Post 10 Oct. 1997; Info-CongoKinshasa 12 Sept. 1997d, 3-4). Tutsi families who had fled the country during the war received a frosty reception when they returned after Kabila's victory and tried to retake possession of their land and belongings (The Washington Post 10 Oct. 1997; HRWFIDH Oct. 1997, 32-33; United Nations 17 Oct. 1997, para. 87).

North Kivu (especially the Masisi region) was the scene of an armed conflict between AFDL forces and a group of rebels consisting of former FAZ soldiers, former Rwandan Armed Forces (Forces armées rwandaïses, or FAR) soldiers, Interahamwes [\[4\]](#) and Mai-Mai warriors (Info-CongoKinshasa 11 Aug. 1997d, 4; *Courrier international* 11-17 Sept. 1997; *La Presse* 16 Sept. 1997; United Nations 17 Oct. 1997, para. 87). In particular, in July 1997, Rwandan soldiers who had been lent to Kabila's forces set fire to some fifty villages in Masisi, ransacked houses and killed more than 2,000 civilian inhabitants in order to avenge the killing of 162 AFDL soldiers by Mai-Mai warriors (AFP 5 Sept. 1997; AZADHO 4 Sept. 1997; *Courrier international* 11-17 Sept. 1997; Info-CongoKinshasa 12 Sept. 1997d, 4; AI 3 Dec. 1997, 17). The Mai-Mai warriors had themselves been avenging the insult suffered by a customary chief in South Kivu when he and his assistants had been forced by AFDL Tutsi soldiers to carry their baggage (AFP 5 Sept. 1997; AZADHO 4 Sept. 1997; *Courrier international* 11-17 Sept. 1997; Info-CongoKinshasa 12 Sept. 1997d). It was in Masisi that the violence against the Mai-Mai warriors was the most devastating (The Washington Post 10 Oct. 1997; Info-CongoKinshasa 12 Sept. 1997d, 4; AZADHO Nov. 1997, 8).

In early August 1997 AFDL troops killed 800 people when they attacked four villages to the south of Fizi where they thought a group of rebels were hiding (Info-CongoKinshasa 12 Sept. 1997d, 3; New African Dec. 1997, 13; AI 3 Dec. 1997, 17). The rebel group in question, called the Alliance for Democratic Resistance (Alliance pour la résistance démocratique), is made up of ex-FAR soldiers, militias of the Babembe, Bafulero and Bavira ethnic groups, and members of the Front for the Defence of Democracy (Front pour la défense de la démocratie, or FDD, made up of elements of the Burundi rebellion); it reportedly wants to destabilize South Kivu [translation] "by targeting in particular the 'Tutsi' authorities and the Banyamulenge population" (Info-CongoKinshasa 12 Sept. 1997d, 3) [\[5\]](#).

In September 1997, a hundred or so Mai-Mai warriors (600 according to AZADHO) who had gone to the Kinyogute military camp in North Kivu to surrender their arms and enrol in the National Congolese Army (Armée nationale congolaise, or ANC) were reportedly executed by Congolese and Rwandan soldiers (AFP 19 Sept. 1997; RFI 20 Sept. 1997; AZADHO Nov. 1997, 5). According to AZADHO, there were 17 survivors (ibid.). AFP reports that the local authorities denied these allegations and stated that there had been no massacre (19 Sept. 1997).

In the hope of finding a definitive solution to interethnic rivalries, the authorities set up a [translation] "pacification commission" on 10 September 1997 (Info-CongoKinshasa 12 Sept. 1997d; The Washington Post 10 Oct. 1997). However, according to one source, Kabila seems to want to play down the extent of the conflict (ibid.) by blaming it on the Interahamwes and suggesting that the Mai-Mai are nothing more than bandits (Info-CongoKinshasa 12 Sept. 1997d, 4).

In Goma and further to the south, clashes between the Mai-Mai warriors and AFDL troops continued into October 1997 (Info-CongoKinshasa 17 Oct. 1997c). Hostilities also continued in South Kivu (Info-CongoKinshasa 14 Nov. 1997b; see also AFP 11 Dec. 1997). According to an AZADHO report, the situation in Masisi continued to be troubled due to the activities of the Congolese and Rwandan armies and the Mai-Mai warriors (Nov. 1997, 2). A relief worker told AFP in January 1998 that both North Kivu and South Kivu were [translation] "'zones of instability'" and that relief organizations could no longer continue to operate there (AFP 24 Jan. 1998a). AZADHO reports that in the locality of Mutembo, situated on the northern edge of North Kivu, soldiers killed about a hundred civilians during the night of 18 February 1998 in revenge for an earlier rebel attack (26 Feb. 1998).

NOTES

[4] The Interahamwes are Rwandan Hutu militiamen (*The Washington Post* 10 Oct. 1997) [\[back\]](#)

[5] For more information the the rebel groups fighting against Kabila's troops, see *Africa Confidential* 20 Feb. 1998, 5-6. [\[back\]](#)

NOTES ON SELECTED SOURCES

AZADHO

The Human Rights Association of Congo-Kinshasa (Association de défense des droits de l'homme de Congo-Kinshasa, or AZADHO) was founded in 1991. AZADHO is a member of a network of 250 NGOs and has regional offices in addition to its head office in Kinshasa. Since the AFDL takeover, death threats have forced AZADHO president Guillaume Ngefa and other AZADHO leaders to go into exile. AZADHO regularly issues press releases to express its concern about the situation of various individuals and groups. It also publishes an annual report on the human rights situation in the DRC.

Info-CongoKinshasa (Montreal)

Formerly known as Info-Zaire, Info-CongoKinshasa is published by the Montreal-based Round Table on Human Rights in the Democratic Republic of Congo (Table de concertation sur les droits humains en République démocratique du Congo). It was founded in February 1992 by Denis Tougas, its current editor. Info-CongoKinshasa is published monthly and distributed to about 300 groups and individuals in North America and Europe who are interested in the political, economic and human rights situation in the DRC.

Voix des sans voix pour les droits de l'homme (VSV)

This organization, whose name means "Voice of the Voiceless for Human Rights," was founded in 1983 by students and other young intellectuals in order as an instrument in the fight against the Mobutu regime. VSV is a non-governmental organization that publicizes and defends human rights and assists those whose human rights have been violated. The organization has bureaus in various regions, including North Kivu, South Kivu, Upper Zaire and Kinshasa. Its president is Floribert Chebeya. VSV regularly issues press releases condemning human rights violations in the DRC and also publishes reports on the human rights situation in that country.

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