

## Democratic Republic of Congo

<b>Response to Information Request Number:</b>	DRC99003.ZAR
<b>Date:</b>	19 August 1999
<b>Subject:</b>	Democratic Republic of Congo: Information on whether there is ethnic cleansing of Kasai residents country-wide, whether former officers and/or family members of the Mobutu government would be at risk, and whether or not membership in a political opposition group outside the DRC would cause punishment by Kabila in the DRC.
<b>From:</b>	INS Resource Information Center
<b>Keywords:</b>	Democratic Republic of Congo / Arbitrary arrest / Arrested persons / Armed conflicts / Conseil National des Organisations Non-Gouvernementales de Developpment du Congo (CNONGD) / Detained persons / Discrimination based on family status / Discrimination based on ethnic origin / Ethnicity / Ethnic cleansing / Ethnic conflicts / Forced migration / Freedom of association / Freedom of political opinion / Genocide / Hostile working environment / Innovative Forces for Unity and Solidarity (FONUS) / Intellectuals / International security / Badouin Hamuli Kabarhuza / Laurent Kabila / Sylvain Kamany / Kasai / Adolphe Kishwe Maya / Placide Mukendi / Joseph Olenghakoy / Eugene Diomi Ndongala / Police investigation / Political participation / Political parties / Political persecution / Political representation / Political violence / Prison conditions / Public office / Public servants / Racial violence / Racist activities / Right to defend oneself / Right to security of persons / Mobutu Sese Seko / Working conditions

### Query:

1. Is there evidence of ethnic cleansing of Kasai residents country-wide?
2. Are family members of former Mobutu government officials at risk?
3. Is there evidence that membership in a political opposition group outside the DRC would cause punishment by Kabila in the DRC?

### Response:

1. Is there evidence of ethnic cleansing of Kasai residents country-wide?

A Congolese human rights lawyer states that there is no further evidence of an ethnic cleansing against Kasaians since the tragic cleansing in Katanga in 1992-1993 (Congolese human rights lawyer 4 May 1999). A representative from the Africa Division of Human Rights Watch (HRW) also corroborates this view saying HRW is not aware of any ethnic cleansing currently taking place (HRW 15 April 1999).

A Columbian University research scholar states that there is a war going on today and if someone belongs to the wrong ethnic group, they better "watch out." Adding however, that currently there is no successful system of ethnic cleansing of Kasai

residents taking place today (Weiss 15 Apr. 1999).

2. Are family members of former Mobutu government officials at risk?

A representative from HRW states that family members being at risk would depend upon the official's profile, and how prominent they were in the opposition against Kabila. This would depend on individual cases focusing on how outspoken the official was (HRW 15 Apr. 1999).

After a visit to the DRC in July 1998, a Congolese human rights lawyers stated that family members of former Mobutu government officials were still being harassed by Kabila's security forces (Congolese human rights lawyer 4 May 1999).

A Columbian University research scholar states that former Mobutu officials are everywhere, including Kabila's government. Kabila has former Mobutu officials working for him as well. For example, Mobutu's generals are now working for Kabila. There are some former Mobutu officials who are part of opposition groups that engage in violent confrontations. Whether or not family members of former Mobutu officials would be in danger would depend on their ethnic group, their activities since the fall of Mobutu, and what role they are playing now (Weiss 15 Apr. 1999).

The 1998 Amnesty International world report on human rights states that from June 1997 onward, dozens of people associated with the Mobutu government were arrested. After being arrested, torture and ill-treatment of detainees was widespread (AI 1998, 140).

In February 1997, Congolese police arrested two opposition leaders outside the gates of the U.S. Embassy in the DRC. Eugene Diomi Ndongala and Adolphe Kishwe Maya, both former ministers under Mobutu were arrested after discussing opposition proposals to end Congo's war with U.S. officials. One day before this event took place, two opposition activists, Sylvain Kamany and Placide Mukendi, were released after five days of interrogation from the Congolese intelligence officers. Kabila has overseen dozens of arbitrary arrests of journalists, opposition leaders, and activists since he took power in May 1997 (AP 17 Feb. 1999).

The Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 1998* reports that in on December 11, 1997, security forces arrested Eugene Diomi Ndongala, the head of the political party, Front for the Survival of Democracy (FSD) at his house and raped two of his female relatives. Diomi was held at a military camp and was severely beaten on a daily basis until his release on January 8, 1999 (DOS 1999).

3. Is there evidence that membership in a political opposition group outside the DRC would cause -punishment by Kabila in the DRC?

Outside activity may lead to punishment by Kabila depending on what role and how prominent that person is internationally (HRW 15 Apr. 1999). A Columbian University research scholar agrees saying that punishment would depend on what position they hold and how outspoken they are. Kabila is getting nervous since there is a war going on, so he is throwing people in jail. A prime example of this is the arrest of Badouin Hamuli Kabarhuza, president of the Conseil National des organisations non-gouvernementales de developpement du Congo (CNONGD). Hamuli was thrown in jail in March 1999 for holding a conference in South Africa discussing the DRC conflict. He was released on March 14, 1999 (*Africa News Service* 14 Apr. 1999; 15 Apr. 1999). Joseph Olenghakoy, the leader of FONUS (Innovative Forces for Unity and Solidarity) who was active against Mobutu and now Kabila was also thrown into jail (Weiss 15 Apr. 1999).

**References:**

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