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7 February 2006

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Zimbabwe: The official Website of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC); whether the MDC has opened branches abroad, particularly in Canada and if so the names of the office bearers in Canada; the purpose of these branches abroad and whether these offices support refugee claims abroad (2005 - 2006)
Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

In the "Contact Information" section on the Website of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), a heading endorses the following as "Official MDC Approved Websites": <<http://www.mdczimbabwe.org>> and <<http://www.mdczimbabwe.com>> (n.d.a). In corroboration of this information, an MDC representative reported in 26 January 2006 correspondence, that the following Website is the "official and current Website for MDC Zimbabwe": <<http://www.mdczimbabwe.org>>.

The "Contact Information" section of the MDC Zimbabwe Website also contains the heading "Illegal & Non Affiliated Websites," of which the MDC does not endorse in any way, and lists those as being: <www.mdcatlanta.org> and <<http://www.mdczimbabwe.tk>> (n.d.a).

A 12 December 2005 article that appears on the MDC Website noted that two new branches of the MDC had been established in Toronto and Niagara, Ontario, Canada. In particular, the article explained that the establishment of the two new branches followed the "successful launching of the Niagara Falls executive branch in November 2005" (MDC 12 Dec. 2005). Moreover, a list of executive branch members for each new branch was provided and is listed below:

Toronto

Chairman - Mr. Andrew Manyevere

Vice chairman - Mr. Andrew Mudzingwa

Secretary-General - Mrs. Benedicta Madawo

Vice secretary-general - Mr. Owen Nyereyemhuka

Treasurer - Mr. Climate Mlambo

Secretary for Women's Affairs - vacant

Vice secretary for Women's Affairs - vacant

Publicity Secretary - Mr. Johannes Mutyanda

Organising Secretary - Mr. Enock Marumbwa

Youth Secretary - Mr. Rodney Tshabalala

Vice Youth Secretary - Mr. Evans Munyoro

Executive Committee members:

Mr. Perkins Khumalo

Mr. Paul Madamombe

Mr. Nicholas Nyandoro

Niagara Falls

Chairperson - John Madzingo

Vice-Chairperson - Brian Mutuma

Secretary-General - Chenjerayi Mashayamombe

Treasurer - Rodrick Miriyoga

Secretary for Women's Affairs - Marcy Mutuma

Organizing Secretary - Cythia Chikanda

Youth Secretary - Godfrey Chikanda

Committee member - Brighton Mhonderwa

Committee member - Tracy Masanzu

Committee member - Herbert Sinamano

(MDC 12 Dec. 2005)

With regard to information about the purpose of these Canadian-based MDC branches, an MDC representative provided the following information in 24 January 2006 correspondence:

The MDC Canada branches now forming in support of the mainstream MDC in Zimbabwe led by Morgan Tsvangirai have the blessing of MDC Zimbabwe to carry the party flag and upkeep the values per our constitution. The branches will reach out to the Canadian public and make the Zimbabwe inner situation more transparent in as far as ordinary Zimbabweans suffer persecution from Zanu Pf.

They are a reflection of the terror enforced on common people through the structures of Zanu Pf as it seeks to obliterate the existence and function of multi party system to establish democracy in the country.

They are to lobby Canadian government support position strongly against the human rights and people abuses committed by the Robert Mugabe government and his party in power. They are to lobby nonprofit organizations' and individuals' support against the intransigence of Zanu PF to change government through a democratic process of a free and fair election and prevail on support for our cause and party to establish democracy through a free and fair election.

They are to carry all sorts of political activities within the framework of the laws of Canada in realizing these and many other democratic ways of bringing complete freedom on the people of Zimbabwe through the leadership of the MDC (24 Jan. 2006).

In reference to whether the MDC supports refugee claims abroad, the MDC representative noted, in 26 January 2006 correspondence, that "[b]ranches not only in Canada but worldwide do not write letters or are not permitted to write letters of support." Instead, individuals requesting support for refugee claims must direct their request to the following email: <asylum@mdczimbabwe.org>.

Moreover, the MDC representative explained:

Our policy is to verify each and every member who claims membership or a position in MDC while seeking asylum. We do have a master database that covers all members over the world and it will take a few days to verify members depending on workload (MDC 26 Jan. 2006).

In addition, the MDC representative asserted that the MDC would "help the USA and Canadian authorities prosecute anyone who abuses or fraudulently use [s] the MDC Zimbabwe brand name to write unauthorised letters of support" (ibid.).

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.

References

Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). 26 January 2006. Correspondence received from a representative.

_____. 24 January 2006. Correspondence received from a representative.

_____. 12 December 2005. "MDC News."
<<http://www.mdczimbabwe.org/Archives/2005/Dec/dec12.htm>> [Accessed 19
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2006]

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