



RESPONSES TO INFORMATION REQUESTS (RIRs)

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12 December 2005

COD100781.FE

Democratic Republic of Congo: Treatment of Congolese Tutsis (Banyamulenge) from the East in the western and southern parts of the country, mainly in Kinshasa and Lubumbashi; whether Banyamulenge are specifically singled out by the general population and by government authorities because of their ties to the rebel movements for whom they are believed to be spies (December 2005)
Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

The information in the following three paragraphs was provided during an 8 December 2005 telephone interview with a researcher, a Doctor of History, at the Centre for the Study of the Great Lakes Region of Africa (Centre d'étude de la région des Grands lacs d'Afrique) at the University of Antwerp in Belgium. The Centre publishes the annual *Africa's Great Lakes: Yearbook (L'Afrique des Grands lacs : annuaire)*, and the researcher is an expert on Central Africa, particularly the Kivu region, especially with respect to governance, crises, peace, conflicts, and governmental and non-governmental stakeholders (Centre d'étude de la région des Grands lacs d'Afrique n.d.).

Congolese citizens of Rwandan origin, particularly Tutsis, are perceived by other Congolese citizens as being responsible for the last two wars (1996-1997 and 1998-2002) in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The members of other ethnic groups have always associated them with [translation] "aggressor nations," more specifically, with Rwanda.

During recent years, Congolese citizens of Rwandan origin, particularly Tutsis, have been subject to exclusion, shunning, resentment and hostility by members of other ethnic groups, who were often encouraged by certain media and politicians that touted hatred against those considered to be Rwandans. For that reason, most Congolese citizens of Rwandan origin who lived in various regions of the country, Kinshasa in particular, feared violence and fled to the East or to neighbouring countries, or were evacuated to other countries, mainly those of Europe and of the Americas.

Even today, members of other ethnic groups are distrustful of Congolese citizens of Rwandan origin, particularly Tutsis. With the exception of those involved in the various transition institutions, few Congolese citizens of Rwandan origin would dare return to live in Kinshasa or in other western regions of the country. According to the researcher, this attitude is more a reflection of the fear of possible renewed hostilities than of known abuse. He added that, to his knowledge, the few Tutsis who have returned to cities like Kinshasa or Lubumbashi are not treated differently than other citizens. Since Congolese government authorities are careful about portraying the right image to the

international community, they are trying to fight the exclusion (8 Dec. 2005).

The president of the Centre for Women's Development (Centre de développement pour la femme, CDF), a non-governmental women's organization in Kinshasa, stated in correspondence sent to the Research Directorate on 7 December 2005 that she knows a few Banyamulenge who live in Kinshasa and whom she often sees in the streets and in the churches. The president of the CDF said that Kinshasa has a high crime rate for which unpaid military officers are often responsible; however, she does not think that Banyamulenge are targeted more than other citizens (7 Dec. 2005).

During a 10 November 2005 telephone interview, the executive secretary of the Center for Human Rights and Humanitarian Law (Centre des droits de l'homme et du droit humanitaire, CDH), a human rights organization in Lubumbashi, said that, during the war, most Congolese citizens of Rwandan origin, including Banyamulenge, left Lubumbashi to flee the acts of violence to which they were subjected. According to the executive secretary of the CDH, the few who have returned there have been able to collect their possessions (10 Nov. 2005). However, he said that, upon their return, most of those Banyamulenge have been summoned by security forces to explain their absence (CDH 10 Nov. 2005). He was unaware of any recent cases of Congolese citizens of Rwandan origin being targeted by other ethnic groups (ibid.).

An October 2005 report by the United Kingdom Immigration and Nationality Directorate (IND), quoting various sources, gives a brief overview of the history of Congolese citizens of Rwandan origin and describes the anti-Tutsi sentiments that have prevailed in the DRC in recent years (UK Oct. 2005, Sec. 6.80-6.96).

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 additional sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

References

Centre de développement pour la femme (CDF). 7 December 2005. Correspondence from the president.

Centre des droits de l'homme et du droit humanitaire (CDH) [Lubumbashi]. 10 November 2005. Telephone interview with the executive secretary.

Centre d'étude de la région des Grands lacs d'Afrique at the University of Antwerp, Belgium. 8 December 2005. Telephone interview with a researcher.

_____. N.d. "Équipe." <http://www.gralac.org/pers_f.htm> [Accessed 7 Nov. 2005]

United Kingdom (UK). October 2005. Home Office Science and Research Group, Immigration and Nationality Directorate (IND). *Country Report: Democratic Republic of the Congo*. <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs05/drcongo_011105.doc> [Accessed 5

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Additional Sources Consulted

Publications: *Africa Confidential*, *Africa Research Bulletin*, *L'Afrique des Grands lacs: Annuaire 2004-2005*, *Jeune Afrique/L'Intelligent*, Resource Centre country file.

Internet sites, including: AllAfrica.com, Amnesty International, BBC News, *CIA World Factbook*, European Country of Origin Information Network (ECOI.net), Factiva, Freedom House, Human Rights Watch (HRW), IDP report of Norwegian Refugee Council, International Crisis Group (ICG), International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), Migration News, Minorities at Risk Project, Relief Web, UNHCR, United Kingdom Immigration and Nationality Directorate (IND), UN Security Council on Eritrea, US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants, United States Department of State.

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