Democratic Republic of Congo: The role and responsibilities of an assistant secretary to the minister in public administration; whether it is a high-ranking position; if so, its equivalent in the Canadian public service (2006 - 2009)
Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

Sources consulted by the Research Directorate indicate that assistant secretaries to the minister are staff members who are appointed by the minister (DRC 1 Sept. 2009; JED 4 Sept. 2009). In a 1 September 2009 telephone interview with the Research Directorate, a former public servant with the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (ministère des Affaires étrangères et de la coopération internationale) of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) explained that the position of assistant secretary to the minister is a [translation] "political/administrative" position in the DRC public service. According to the source, in a minister’s office, subordinate positions that are filled by appointment by the minister include secretaries and assistant secretaries to the minister (DRC 1 Sept. 2009).

In correspondence sent to the Research Directorate on 4 September 2009, the president of Journaliste en danger (JED), a non-governmental organization (NGO) based in Kinshasa that promotes the defence and promotion of freedom of the press, stated that the position of assistant secretary to the minister was a [translation] “political position” that was not part of the public service in DRC. The president of JED provided the following explanation:

[Translation]

It is a man or a woman often brought in by the minister who appoints them to assist the secretary to the minister, who is political. The person often leaves at the end of their minister’s mandate. The day-to-day work of an assistant secretary to the minister is to assist the secretary in their work for the minister. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, staff members in the minister’s office are sometimes called upon to perform personal tasks for the minister. (JED 4 Sept. 2009)

In a 2 September 2009 telephone interview with the Research Directorate, a representative from the Embassy of the DRC in Ottawa stated that, in the DRC public service, the assistant secretary to the minister is a low-level position essentially responsible for administrative support work such as [translation] “filing, sorting mail, planning meetings, preparing agendas, and drafting minutes.” According to the Embassy Representative, an assistant secretary to the minister is equivalent to an administrative assistant in the Canadian public service (DRC 2
In a telephone interview with the Research Directorate on 8 September 2009, a researcher from the University of Ottawa explained that, as well as being comparable to an administrative assistant position in Canada’s public service, the position of assistant secretary to the minister in the DRC could be compared to that of a political attaché, because of the close relationship with the minister. Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

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.

**References**


_____. 1 September 2009. Telephone interview with a former public servant from the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation.

Journaliste en danger (JED). 4 September 2009. Correspondence from the President.

Researcher from the University of Ottawa. 8 September 2009. Telephone interview.

**Additional Sources Consulted**

**Internet sites, including**: AllAfrica.com, Congonline.com, *Le Potentiel* [Kinshasa], *Le Phare* [Kinshasa], Digitalcongo.net.

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