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## RESPONSES TO INFORMATION REQUESTS (RIRs)

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The Board		6 April 2011
About the Board	<b>COD103713.FE</b>	
Biographies		
Organization Chart	Democratic Republic of the Congo: Information on the Bundu dia Kongo (BDK) movement, including its political program, location of its offices, the number of its members, its situation with respect to other political parties, and the attitude of government authorities toward its leaders and members (2007 - April 2011)	
Employment	Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa	
Legal and Policy		
References		
Publications		
Tribunal		
Refugee Protection Division	Founded in 1986 by Ne Muanda Nsemi (Human Rights Watch 25 Nov. 2008; BDK 2007 n.d.b), the Bundu dia Kongo (BDK) movement describes itself as a [translation] "religious group with a global vision"; that is, it is active in the science, religious and political areas (ibid.). However, according to a United Nations report, the BDK was founded in 1969 (May 2008, para. 24). In the Kikongo language, Bundu dia Kongo means [translation] "union with the lord Akongo" (BDK 15 Mar. 2009).	
Immigration Division		
Immigration Appeal Division		
Decisions	<b>Political program and ideology</b>	
Forms	Two sources state that the BDK is fighting for greater independence in Bas-Congo province (US 11 Mar. 2010, Sec. 1.a; Human Rights Watch Jan. 2009).	
Statistics	According to a report published by Human Rights Watch on 25 November 2008, the BDK advocates [English version by Human Rights Watch] a "return to African authenticity," basing its teachings on the visions revealed to Ne Muanda Nsemi by the "spirits of its people." A report investigating events in Bas-Congo in February and March 2008, which was published by the Human Rights Division of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCR), explains that the BDK's goal is to promote [English version by the United Nations (UN)]	
Research		
Research Program		
National Documentation Packages		
Issue Papers and Country Fact Sheets		
Responses to Information Requests	the 'renaissance' of the African people and their spiritual, cultural, moral and social values; the reappropriation of resources in the geographical region defined by the BDK as the Kongo Kingdom, as well as the reunification of the Kingdom's people; and the establishment of a decentralized political and administrative system which would give the Kongo people more control over their political and economic destiny. (UN May 2008, para. 24)	
Recent Research		
Media Centre		
News		
Information Sheets		
Media Relations		
Transparency		
Completed Access to Information Requests	The report states that prior to colonization, this kingdom encompassed Bas-Congo, as well as parts of Congo-Brazzaville, Gabon, Bandundu and Angola, including the enclave of Cabinda (ibid., 8).	
	<b>Number of members and location of its offices</b>	

## Proactive Disclosure

According to the United Nations report on the Bas-Congo events, the BDK has [UN English version] "several thousand members," most of whom live in Bas-Congo (ibid., para. 24). In addition, according to an article published by Afrik.com on 1 February 2007, the BDK has [translation] "thousands of followers," primarily in Bas-Congo, Kinshasa and Bandundu.

The website of the BDK indicates that the movement has offices in Kinshasa; Brazzaville; Luanda, Angola; and London (BDK n.d.a).

### **Situation of the BDK and the Bundu dia Mayala (BDM) compared with other political parties**

According to sources consulted by the Research Directorate, the government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) declared the BDK illegal in 2008 (Freedom House 2009; Human Rights Watch Jan. 2009; Reuters 22 Mar. 2008). According to a 17 December 2010 article published on the information website Congo'2000, after the BDK was banned, following the troubles between BDK supporters and law enforcement officials in 2007 and 2008, Ne Muanda Nsemi created the Bundu dia Mayala (BDM) political party. The BDM advocates community spirit or African socialism (BDK 15 Mar. 2009). Longo Nzita is listed as the BDM's national vice-president (*Le Potentiel* 20 Aug. 2010), and Fula Matingu as the secretary general (Radio Okapi 17 Dec. 2010). According to two sources, the BDM is one of the political parties supporting the candidacy of Étienne Tshisekedi, chief of the Union for Democracy and Social Progress (Union pour la démocratie et le progrès social, UDPS), in the 2011 presidential elections (*La Prospérité* 17 Feb. 2011; Congo'2000 17 Dec. 2010). Information on the situation of the BDM compared with the other parties could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

### **Treatment of members of the BDK and the BDM**

The United Nations May 2008 report on the special inquiry into the conflicts between the National Congolese Police (Police nationale congolaise, PNC) and the BDK in March and February 2008 in Bas-Congo provides some information on the treatment of members of the BDK by the PNC.

Since October 2007, tensions have marked relations between BDK members and the authorities in several areas in Bas-Congo (UN May 2008, para. 2). Taking advantage of the weak PNC presence in several villages, the BDK was able to carry out state functions. In towns and villages where there were few police, the BDK implemented traditional tribunals that were supported by [UN English version] "enforcement agents" (ibid., para. 29). In an attempt to re-establish its authority throughout Bas-Congo province, the DRC government dispatched the police (ibid., para. 3). According to official sources, clashes resulted in the deaths of 27 people, including 3 police officers; however, the UN investigation team concluded that at least 100 people, mostly members of the BDK, died (ibid., para. 7). According to the UN investigators, there was [UN English version] an "unwarranted or excessive use of force" by the PNC during these operations (ibid., para. 8). Moreover, police arrested more than 150 BDK supporters; [UN English version] "[a] number of them were victims of torture or cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment" (ibid.). In a 2009 report on the DRC, Freedom House stated that in October 2008, nine BDK members who were arrested were sentenced to death, and that four others died in detention (Freedom House 2009). Freedom House also reports that more than 150 BDK members were arrested and that more than 100 people died during the conflicts (ibid.). Information indicating whether the people who were arrested were released or prosecuted could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

In a 20 August 2010 article published by the Kinshasa daily *Le Potentiel*, the

BDM were reported as claiming that armed men wearing PNC uniforms kidnapped its national vice-president and five party leaders from Boma in August 2010, and drove them to an unknown destination. The article states that five other supporters kidnapped in Patu were also driven to an unknown destination (*Le Potentiel* 20 Aug. 2010). Corroborating information and information on what happened to the kidnap victims could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

According to a 17 December 2010 article by Radio Okapi, the radio of the United Nations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (Radio Okapi n.d.), in a press release issued on 15 December 2010, the BDM accused the police special services of arresting and detaining four of its members in December 2010. Radio Okapi added that the Minister of the Interior (ministre de l'Intérieur) of the Bas-Congo government said that BDM supporters were arrested for multiple offences, but did not indicate what those offences were (Radio Okapi 17 Dec. 2010). According to the Minister, those arrested should be brought to trial (*ibid.*). According to two sources, the Minister of the Interior in Bas-Congo does not recognize the BDM (Radio Okapi 17 Dec. 2010; *Le Potentiel* 20 Aug. 2010). However, in an excerpt from a BDM communiqué that is quoted in the *Le Potentiel* article, the party's president received [translation] "a receipt from the Supreme Court of Justice 'in lieu of a registration certificate (Article 14, subsection 15 of the Political Parties Act) since 20 April 2010'" (*ibid.*). Information on how this matter has progressed 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

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*La Prospérité* [Kinshasa]. 17 February 2011. "Au-delà de l'UDPS : la 'Dynamique Tshisekedi Président' en action!" <<http://www.laprosperteonline.net/show.php?id=6924&rubrique=La%20Une>> [Accessed 24 Mar. 2011]

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### Additional Sources Consulted

**Oral sources:** Attempts to contact representatives of the Bundu dia Kongo (BDK) and La Voix des sans-voix pour les droits de l'homme (VSV), as well as a journalist with the Brussels daily *Le Soir* were unsuccessful.

**Publications:** *The Europa World Year Book 2010, Political Handbook of the World 2010, Political Parties of the World 2009*.

**Internet sites, including:** Amnesty International (AI), *La Conscience* [Kinshasa], Fédération internationale des ligues des droits de l'homme (FIDH), GlobalSecurity.org, Infobascongo.net, International Crisis Group, *Jeune Afrique*, KongoTimes!, Organisation internationale de la francophonie (OIF), Organisation mondiale contre la torture (OMCT), *Le Phare* [Kinshasa], Réseau documentaire international sur la région des Grands Lacs africains, Societecivile.cd, Syfia Grands Lacs, United Nations — Refworld.

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