



## RESPONSES TO INFORMATION REQUESTS (RIRs)

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The Board		16 March 2012
About the Board	<b>COD104040.E</b>	
Biographies		
Organization Chart	Democratic Republic of the Congo: Movement for the Liberation of Congo (Mouvement de libération du Congo, MLC), including leadership and treatment of party members (2009-2012)	
Employment		
Legal and Policy		
References	Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa	
Publications		
Tribunal	<b>1. Movement for the Liberation of Congo</b>	
Refugee Protection Division	From 2006 to 2011, the Movement for the Liberation of Congo (Mouvement de libération du Congo, MLC) was the main opposition party in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) (CongoPlanet.com 3 Feb. 2012; <i>Le Monde</i> 2 Feb. 2012; <i>Challenges</i> 24 Nov. 2011), with 64 elected representatives (ibid.; International Crisis Group 5 May 2011, 24). New elections in November 2011 saw 22 MLC members elected to the legislature ( <i>Le Monde</i> 2 Feb. 2012; DRC n.d.).	
Immigration Division	According to the DRC electoral commission, the party now holds the fifth highest number of seats as a result of the 2011 elections (ibid.). A majority of the MLC representatives (13 seats) are located in Equateur province (ibid. 1 Feb. 2012).	
Immigration Appeal Division		
Decisions		
Forms		
Statistics		
Research	Several sources reported in 2011 on challenges faced by the MLC in the lead-up to the November 2011 elections (France 24 23 Nov. 2011; RFI 5 May 2011; ISS 11 May 2011; International Crisis Group 5 May 2011, 6). The French television and online news source France 24 reported that the party was "divided" (23 Nov. 2011). Radio France internationale (RFI) described the MLC as [translation] "cut in half" and in a state of "crisis" (5 May 2011). An analysis published by the Pretoria-based Institute for Security Studies, a "pan-African applied policy research institute" working on human security (ISS n.d.), stated that the MLC has "suffered serious damage since [2006]" due in part to leadership difficulties (ibid. 11 May 2011). The International Crisis Group wrote in a report on the electoral process that the party is "in decline" and in a "deep internal crisis because of the presence/absence of its leader" (5 May 2011, 6, 24).	
Research Program		
National Documentation Packages		
Issue Papers and Country Fact Sheets		
Responses to Information Requests		
Recent Research		
Media Centre	<b>2. Leadership</b>	
News	The president of the MLC, Jean-Pierre Bemba Gombo [commonly known as Jean-Pierre Bemba], was arrested in 2008 on charges of crimes against humanity and war crimes committed by MLC militia under his command in the Central African Republic in 2002 and 2003 (RNW 9 Sept. 2011; Hironelle News Agency 25 Aug. 2011). His trial at the International Criminal Court (ICC) began in November 2010 and is reportedly expected to last until December 2012 (ibid.).	
Information Sheets		
Media Relations		
Transparency		
Completed Access to Information Requests		

## Proactive Disclosure

Sources indicate that, at its party convention in July 2011, the MLC renewed Bemba's mandate as party president for a five-year term (*Le Potentiel* 25 July 2011; *Congo Indépendant* 24 July 2011). Bemba was also designated the MLC's official candidate for the 2011 presidential elections (*Le Potentiel* 25 July 2011; France 24 23 Nov. 2011; *Congo Indépendant* 24 July 2011). However, the ICC reportedly did not allow him to leave prison in The Hague to file his candidacy in the DRC (RNW 9 Sept. 2011; Hironnelle News Agency 9 Sept. 2011). Sources indicate that the MLC did not have an official presidential candidate on the ballots of the 2011 election (*Direct.cd* 12 Sept. 2011; France 24 23 Nov. 2011; RNW 16 Nov. 2011). In November 2011, prior to the elections, Bemba reportedly praised three presidential contenders and called on the Congolese population to vote for the candidate who stood the best chance of defeating the incumbent [President Joseph Kabila] (*Challenges* 24 Nov. 2011; *La Prospérité* 24 Nov. 2011).

Sources indicate that François Mwamba [also spelled Muamba; also known as François Muamba Tshishimbi] was ousted as the secretary-general of the party in April 2011 (France 24 23 Nov. 2011; ISS 11 May 2011; *Congo Indépendant* 24 July 2011). Mwamba was reportedly replaced by Thomas Luhaka [also known as Thomas Luhaka Losandjola] (ISS 11 May 2011; *Le Potentiel* 25 July 2011). Sources in 2011 and 2012 identified Jean Lucien Bussa Tongba as the deputy general-secretary of the party (*The Reporter* 1 Oct. 2011; Radio Okapi 10 Feb. 2012); however, Radio Okapi, the UN radio in the DRC (ibid. n.d.), reported in February 2012 that Tongba had been suspended from his functions (ibid. 10 Feb. 2012). The online newspaper *Congo Indépendant*, which is published by a Brussels-based not-for-profit organization known as Les Amitiés Congo-Europe (n.d.), stated in July 2011 that Jean-Jacques Mbungani Mbanda had recently been promoted to the position of deputy national-secretary responsible for foreign relations (24 July 2011).

## 2.1 Defections of Party Leaders

The RFI reported in July 2011 that former MLC general-secretary François Muamba had formed a new opposition party, the Alliance for the Development and the Republic (Alliance pour le développement et la République, ADR) (11 July 2011).

Sources report that, in April 2011, José Makila Sumanda [commonly known as José Makila], the former governor of Equateur province who has been described by the International Crisis Group as "the former right-hand man of Jean-Pierre Bemba" (5 May 2011), had defected to form a new party, the Labour Alliance for Development (Alliance des travaillistes pour le développement, ATD) (International Crisis Group 5 May 2011, 4; *L'Observateur* 14 Apr. 2011).

Congolese media sources report that Adam Bombole, the leader of the MLC in Kinshasa, ran for president in the 2011 elections (ACP 12 Sept. 2011; *Direct.cd* 12 Sept. 2011). Online news source *Direct.cd* indicates that Bombole, lacking the endorsement of the MLC, broke away from the party to run as an independent candidate (ibid.).

## 3. Reports of Violence and Other Mistreatment Committed Against Party Members

Media sources report that Marius Gangalé, an MLC party leader, was shot to death in Kinshasa in November 2011 (RFI 23 Nov. 2011; Radio Okapi 23 Nov. 2011). Daniel Botethi, vice-president of the Kinshasa Provincial Assembly and an MLC party leader, was reportedly killed in July 2008 by an armed group (US 25 Feb. 2009; Radio Okapi 9 July 2008).

According to a report by the UN Joint Human Rights Office (UNJHRO) on human rights in the pre-electoral period, an MLC member in South Kivu province

was arrested in March 2011 for owning a journal questioning President Kabila's nationality and had not been released from detention at the time the report was published in November 2011 (UN Nov. 2011, 13). The report also mentions the arrest of an MLC member in Equateur province for organizing a demonstration in support of the former Governor, another member of the MLC (ibid.).

In 2009, Amnesty International reported that military or police officers with suspected ties to the MLC were subject to "regular arbitrary arrests by state security forces" (2009). Additional information on acts of violence committed by or against MLC members between 2009 and 2012 could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

#### 4. Recruitment and Membership

Information on recruitment activities and membership in the MLC, including membership cards, 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.

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### Additional Sources Consulted

**Oral sources:** Attempts to contact Movement for the Liberation of Congo (MLC) headquarters in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Belgium, and France, as well as MLC members of parliament, were unsuccessful.

**Internet sites, including:** ACE Project; *African Observer*; Australia Refugee Review Tribunal; British Broadcasting Corporation; Bembatrial.org; Carter Center; Coalition for the International Criminal Court; Congonline.com; Europa World Plus; Fédération internationale des ligues des droits de l'Homme; GrandsLacsTV.com; International Bureau for Children's Rights; Ireland Legal Aid Board; *Kongo Times*; MLC-Diaspora; Mouvement de Libération Congo; *Political Handbook of the World*; Trust Africa; United Kingdom Country of Origin Information; United Nations — High Commissioner for Refugees, Security Council; United States — Central Intelligence Agency, Congressional Research Services; Voice of Congo.

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