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Responses to Information Requests

Responses to Information Requests (RIR) respond to focused Requests for Information that are submitted to the Research Directorate in the course of the refugee protection determination process. The database contains a seven-year archive of English and French RIRs. Earlier RIRs may be found on the UNHCR's [Refworld](#) website.

15 May 2013

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Democratic Republic of the Congo: The Alliance of Patriots for the Refoundation of the Congo (Alliance des patriotes pour la refondation du Congo, APARECO) in Kinshasa, including its structure, objectives and activities; the membership card; treatment of party members and recruiters by the authorities (2012-May 2013)
Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

The Alliance of Patriots for the Refoundation of the Congo (Alliance des patriotes pour la refondation du Congo, APARECO) describes itself as a [translation] "political platform" that is meant to be "a framework for coordination and action among Congolese political parties, associations and leaders who share the Alliance's patriotic vision" (APARECO n.d.a, 2).

APARECO was founded outside the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) (Agence Belga 17 June 2012; RFI 3 June 2012), on 4 June 2005 (APARECO n.d.a, 2). In an article on radical groups that oppose DRC president Joseph Kabila, *Le Vif / L'Express*, a Belgian weekly newsmagazine launched in 1983 (Roularta Media Group n.d.), describes APARECO as [translation] "a virulently anti-Kabila organization" (20 Jan. 2012).

1. Structure

APARECO drafted an internal regulations [*Règlement d'ordre intérieur*] document, which describes the organization and sets out the division of responsibilities and the conditions for membership (APARECO 30 Sept. 2005, preamble). The Regulations state the following:

[translation]

APARECO is managed by three central bodies and five regional bodies, as follows:

- Central bodies: the Congress, the National Committee, the National Executive Committee;
- Regional bodies: the Regional Assembly, the Regional Committee, the Regional Executive Committee, the Territorial Committee, the Local Assembly. (ibid., Art. 11)

In particular, the Regulations set out that, outside the country, a regional administrative unit [translation] "may be represented by a country or a group of countries depending on the strategic importance or the demographic composition of the diaspora" (ibid., Art. 13).

According to the Regulations, [translation] "the National Committee (comité national, CN) is, by statute, the national board of directors (Conseil d'administration national)" of APARECO (ibid., Art. 15). It [translation] "has the broadest powers for the daily administration and management of the Alliance at the national and international levels" and "comprises a president, first and second vice-presidents, a secretary general, a deputy secretary general, a treasurer general and a deputy treasurer general" (ibid.).

The president of APARECO is Honoré Ngbanda [his full name is Honoré Ngbanda-Nzambo Ko Atumba] (*Le Vif / L'Express* 20 Jan. 2012; APARECO 31 Aug. 2005). He founded APARECO while he was in exile (RFI 14 June 2012; *Le Vif / L'Express* 20 Jan. 2012). Sources note that Honoré Ngbanda worked for former president Mobutu's regime (ibid.) as an advisor (RFI 3 June 2012) and as a minister (APARECO 31 Aug. 2005, Sec. 3). According to his official biography, he was the minister of Defence (ibid.). He also worked for the country's intelligence services (ibid.; UK Nov. 2012, para. 6.04 and 6.06; *Le Vif / L'Express* 20 Jan. 2012). The article published by *Le Vif / L'Express* describes him as [translation] "the much feared former head of Mobutu's secret service" (ibid.).

In November 2012, the United Kingdom (UK) Border Agency published the results of a fact-finding mission to Kinshasa from 18 to 28 June 2012, during which representatives of Congolese NGOs working for human rights provided information on APARECO and its relations with the DRC government (UK Nov. 2012, Sec. 6). The interlocutors interviewed as part of the British fact-finding mission were chosen in consultation with the British embassy in Kinshasa, DRC country

researchers within French and Belgian governmental organizations responsible for refugee issues, and Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International researchers (ibid., para. vii).

Representatives of the Black Togas (Toges noires) told the representatives of the British mission that, because the leader of APARECO was the director of security services under former president Mobutu, he had a great deal of information about the country and its leaders (ibid., para. 6.06). Representatives of Human Rescue also stated that the leader of APARECO had a great deal of information that could be used against the government (ibid., para. 6.01). Along those same lines, representatives of Social Work for Development (Œuvres sociales pour le développement, OSD) stated that, having been a member of the National Intelligence Agency (Agence nationale de renseignements, ANR), the leader of APARECO "knows a lot of secrets" (ibid., para. 6.04).

Representatives of Human Rescue contended to the British mission that there are "a lot of" former Mubuto supporters in APARECO (ibid., para. 6.01). This information could not be corroborated among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

According to a document published by APARECO in January 2013, Faustin Shungu was removed from his position as secretary general of the Alliance (APARECO 7 Jan. 2013). In addition, as of January 2013, the following people held positions within APARECO:

- Ndala Wa Ndala, National Vice-President and Acting Secretary General (ibid.);
- Amisi Kilosho, Deputy Secretary General (ibid.);
- Paul Rigobert Akanga, Deputy Secretary General and Spokesperson (ibid. 13 Jan. 2013).

APARECO is based in Paris (*Le Vif / L'Express* 20 Jan. 2012; APARECO n.d.b), and also has committees around the world (ibid. n.d.c).

Representatives of OSD told the British fact-finding mission that APARECO is active in Europe, but "has nothing" in the DRC (UK Nov. 2012, para. 6.04). The representatives of Human Rescue also stated that "the leader of APARECO does not have the resources to look after a clandestine movement in DRC" (ibid., para. 6.01). However, according to the representatives of the National Network of Human Rights NGOs (Réseau national des ONG des droits de l'homme, Renadhoc), APARECO has members in the DRC, but secretly (ibid., para. 6.03).

Information on APARECO offices in the DRC could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

2. Objectives

APARECO identifies its main objective as the following:

[translation]

APARECO's main objective is the combination of synergies among all Congolese patriots - men and women, young and old, civilian and military, lay and religious - in order to end the occupation of our country and its exploitation by foreign invaders who have managed, by force or by fraud, to take over our political institutions.

This objective is the fundamental challenge for all members of APARECO. It involves a vast public information and education campaign for the Congolese people to raise their awareness of the lurking danger and to urge them to assume full responsibility toward history.

Accordingly, we, the members of APARECO, refuse to take individual political positions and, as a result, to get involved in any conflict among the Congolese people, regardless of our differences of opinion. We believe that the liberation of our people and of our country is and continues to be the major, priority and urgent concern, for which all Congolese people must set aside their selfish interests.

We, the members of APARECO, cannot rely on outside help or assistance because we feel that the Congolese people must first help themselves and take responsibility for their lives. (APARECO n.d.a, 2)

APARECO also published a manifest titled *Blueprint (Projet de société)*, which sets out its philosophy and its position on various political matters. That document is attached to this Response.

3. Membership in APARECO and Membership Card

According to APARECO's Internal Regulations:

[translation]

To become an active member of APARECO, one must: (i) complete and submit a membership form; (ii) commit to attending meetings diligently, particularly meetings of one's local committee; (iii) commit to taking part in APARECO activities in its various areas of work, depending on the person's abilities and availability; (iv) pay membership fees and acquire a membership card (APARECO 30 Sept. 2005, Art. 4).

The Regulations also state:

- Membership must be personally requested by the candidate.
- The membership card is acquired through payment of a fixed fee set by the national committee.
- The membership card bears the member's name and photograph.

- Only the national committee may issue and distribute membership cards, and set the terms and conditions of said cards (ibid., Art. 5).

According to the APARECO website, a membership card costs 10 euros [approximately C\$13 (XE 8 May 2013)], and monthly fees are also 10 euros (APARECO n.d.d).

Additional information on membership in APARECO and its membership cards could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

4. Activities

According to Radio France internationale (RFI), APARECO organized a protest in front of the offices of the International Organisation of the Francophonie (Organisation internationale de la Francophonie, OIF) on June 2, 2012, in Paris, to denounce the 14th summit of the Francophonie, which was being held in Kinshasa in October 2012 (RFI 3 June 2012). A delegation from APARECO also met with the Director of the Office of the Secretary General of the OIF (ibid.)

Sources report that APARECO has formed an alliance with the Union for Democracy and Social Progress (Union pour la démocratie et le progrès social, UDPS) and the People's Resistance Army (Armée de résistance populaire, ARP) (UK Nov. 2012, para. 6.01; RFI 14 June 2012), two other opposition movements (ibid.). According to RFI, APARECO joined with the UDPS and the ARP in Paris on 14 June 2012 to publish a joint statement announcing that they would be working together against the Joseph Kabila regime (ibid.). In their statement, the three groups promised [translation] "to work together to contest the results of the elections on 28 November [2011], to protest the instability in the east, and to prevent the summit of the Francophonie from taking place in Kinshasa in October [2012]" (ibid.). However, RFI noted that, for the moment, this alliance was [translation] "mostly symbolic," but that the three groups were also calling on the other opposition movements to work together (ibid.). Nevertheless, an article by Belga, a Belgian news agency, noted that the President of the UDPS condemned the statement, stating that it had been made, without his authorization, at the initiative of his party's representative in France (17 June 2012).

Information on APARECO's activities in the DRC could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

5. Treatment of APARECO members and recruiters by the authorities

Representatives of Human Rescue told representatives of the British fact-finding mission that the Congolese government "fears" APARECO (UK Nov. 2012, para. 6.01). In addition, representatives of Renadhoc stated that they considered APARECO to be "the most deadly enemy of the government" (ibid., para. 6.03). Representatives of OSD also confirmed that the government sees APARECO as "the enemy" (ibid., para. 6.04).

Representatives of Friends of Nelson Mandela [Les Amis de Nelson Mandela] added that Honoré Nganda was considered to be "an enemy of the State" and that he is known to have launched a campaign alleging that President Joseph Kabila is not Congolese (ibid., para. 6.02).

Representatives of the Black Togas stated that people who are known to be members of APARECO are "mistreated" by the government (ibid., para. 6.06). Information to corroborate this or additional information on the treatment of APARECO members and recruiters by the authorities 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 representatives of the following organizations were unsuccessful within the time constraints of this Response: APARECO; Centre des droits de l'homme et du droit humanitaire; Journalistes pour la promotion et la défense des droits de l'homme; Ligue pour la paix, les droits de l'homme et la justice; Toges noires.

Internet sources, including: AllAfrica; Amnesty International; *L'Avenir*; BSC Infos; *Congo Indépendant*; Congo DRC News; *Le Congolais*; ecoinet; Fédération internationale des ligues des droits de l'homme (FIDH); France – Cour nationale du droit d'asile; Human Rights Watch; *Jeune Afrique*; *Le Potentiel*; *La Prospérité*; Radio Okapi; United Nations – Integrated Regional Information Networks, Refworld; United States – Department of State; Voice of America.

Attachment

Alliance des patriotes pour la refondation du Congo (APARECO). 4 June 2005. *Projet de société.* <<http://www.apareco-rdc.com/projet-de-societe.html>> [Accessed 8 May 2013]

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