



RESPONSES TO INFORMATION REQUESTS (RIRs)

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The Board		8 September 2004
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Biographies		
Organization Chart	Democratic Republic of Congo: The attempted coup d'état of 28 March 2004, particularly the list of the people arrested or sought by the authorities in relation to this event	
Employment		
Legal and Policy	Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board, Ottawa	
References		
Publications	An attempted coup d'état took place in the Democratic Republic of Congo (RDC) during the night of 27-28 March 2004 (<i>Africa Research Bulletin</i> 22 Apr. 2004). The authors of this attempted coup reportedly aimed to take control of four military posts: the Tshatshi and Kokolo military camps, the Gombe Naval Base, and the Ndolo Air Base (ibid.; IRIN 29 Mar. 2004; RFI 28 Mar. 2004).	
Tribunal		
Refugee Protection Division		
Immigration Division		
Immigration Appeal Division	The list of the people arrested or sought by the Congolese authorities in relation to this event could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate. However, during a 27 August 2004 telephone interview, the president of the African Human Rights Association (Association africaine des droits de l'homme, ASADHO), based in Kinshasa, said that it was difficult to identify the people who had been arrested because of the conditions of their detention: they are monitored by members of the military and are not allowed any visitors.	
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Research Program	However, the day after the failed coup attempt, Afrik.com named Samy Eongo as one of the members of the group that was arrested, but it did not give any more information regarding his identity (29 Mar. 2004). According to the same source, Samy Eongo allegedly sought refuge at the United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUC) before he was arrested (Afrik.com 29 Mar. 2004). Hamadoun Touré, spokesperson for the MONUC, however, explained that none of the assailants had sought refuge with the MONUC, but rather that the MONUC had provided help to a person who was mistakenly thought to be a civilian in distress; when they discovered that he was armed, he was handed over to the Congolese authorities (United Nations 29 Mar. 2004). The MONUC, however, did not provide the name of the person concerned.	
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News	Agence France Presse (AFP) and the Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN) of the United Nations both reported that the Congolese authorities had distributed wanted posters and reward offers in April 2004 for information leading to the arrest of Gédéon Gerengba, a.k.a. "Moïse," and Alengbi Mbangui, a.k.a. "Alpha Jephthe" (AFP 8 Apr. 2004; IRIN 9 Apr. 2004). Both men were reportedly officers of late Mobutu Sese Seko's elite forces and were thought to be the "leaders of an armed group that attacked government civil and military facilities" on 28 March 2004 (ibid.; see also AFP 8 Apr. 2004). According to IRIN, the amount of the reward was US\$5,000 (IRIN 9 Apr. 2004). In June 2004, the	
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government incriminated two other former members of Mobutu Sese Sekou's elite armed forces, the Special Presidential Division (Division spéciale présidentielle, DSP): Colonel Dongo and Lieutenant Bobo Toromina, a.k.a. "Serga" (AFP 23 June 2004). IRIN corroborated that the Congolese authorities had identified the masterminds behind the March coup attempt in June 2004 (IRIN 24 June 2004). However, the same source reported that they numbered 13 in all and, although they were officially identified as being mostly military and former presidential guards under Mobutu Sese Seko, their names were not specified (ibid.).

During a 27 August 2004 telephone interview, the president of ASADHO provided the following information on the arrests in relation to the 28 March 2004 failed coup d'état. Of the 88 people originally arrested in relation to the attempted coup, 6 were released. The 82 who remain in custody are members of the military and are being detained at the Kinshasa Penitentiary and Rehabilitation Centre (Centre pénitentiaire et de rééducation de Kinshasa, CPRK), formerly known as Makala Prison. The number of detainees has been implicitly corroborated by the Congolese authorities: [translation] ". . . ten of the assailants appeared at a press conference this Wednesday. . . . Some 72 others are being detained at Kinshasa Central Prison" (AFP 23 June 2004.). This number supposedly reflects [translation] "almost all of the armed forces" implicated in the events of 28 March 2004 (ibid.). IRIN, however, indicated that only 72 people were taken into custody (IRIN 24 June 2004).

The government claims that the prisoners are former members of the DSP and the political police affiliated with the late president Mobutu Sese Seko (AFP 23 June 2004). Various sources corroborated the theory that Mobutu supporters were behind the attack (AFP 8 Apr. 2004; *Keesing's Record of World Events* Mar. 2004; *Africa Research Bulletin* 22 Apr. 2004; Associated Press 29 Mar. 2004; *Mail & Guardian* 29 Mar. 2004; IRIN 29 Mar. 2004; *Jeune Afrique/L'Intelligent* 4 Apr. 2004). Only the Congolese newspaper *Le Soft* offered a contradictory point of view, claiming that the true mastermind behind the coup attempt was President Joseph Kabila (6 May 2004). *Jeune Afrique/L'Intelligent* also offered the theory that the coup was orchestrated from within the government as a possible explanation for the events of the 28 March 2004, but the publication did not say whether or not this was indeed true (4 Apr. 2004).

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.

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Additional Sources Consulted

Publications: Resource Centre country file.

Internet sites, including : AllAfrica, Amnesty International (AI), BBC, DigitalCongo.net, Ecolnet, International Crisis Group.

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