



## RESPONSES TO INFORMATION REQUESTS (RIRs)

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The Board		1 October 2004
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Biographies		
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References	Democratic Republic of Congo: The situation of members of the Wabembe ethnic group in South Kivu, including the existence of a group called Emo Imbondo, whose objective is to remove the government, the Banyarwanda (Rwandans) and the rebels, so that peace may be restored to the region; whether two demonstrations were held in Baraka on 6 and 13 May 2004, respectively, and, if so, whether any of the demonstrators were arrested or killed (2004)	
Publications	Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board, Ottawa	
Tribunal		
Refugee Protection Division	The following information was provided during a 29 September 2004 telephone interview by a journalist from the Belgian daily <i>Le Soir</i> , who is an expert on the African Great Lakes Region, after her return from a September 2004 trip to Bukavu, South Kivu.	
Immigration Division		
Immigration Appeal Division		
Decisions	The Wabembe, also called the Bembe or Babembe, live in the province of South Kivu, in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo (RDC). Like most members of other ethnic groups in the area, the majority of the Babembe strongly oppose the presence of foreign troops in RDC, particularly the Rwandan military, whom they consider [translation] "invaders." The Babembe generally support the central government led by Joseph Kabila, and they oppose the Congolese Rally for Democracy (Rassemblement congolais pour la démocratie, RCD), a rebel movement that sided with Rwanda against the government in the early stages of the war in August 1998. Nevertheless, some Babembe, though they are in the minority, support the RCD's fight against Kabila's regime.	
Forms		
Statistics		
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National Documentation Packages		
Issue Papers and Country Fact Sheets	The journalist said that some of the Babembe who took refuge in Burundi and lived in the same refugee camp as the Banyamulenge (Congolese Tutsis) were killed in a 13 August 2004 attack on the Gatumba camp in Burundi, close to the RDC border.	
Responses to Information Requests		
Recent Research	According to two recent sources, the Babembe were among the Congolese who took refuge in Burundi, fleeing from the fighting that broke out in late May 2004 between insurgents and government forces (United Nations 15 June 2004; AFP 15 June 2004).	
Media Centre		
News		
Information Sheets		
Media Relations	In reference to the war, which started on 2 August 1998, a report from the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) indicated that the Bembe in South Kivu had formed a militia to fight foreign armies, particularly forces from Rwanda (n.d.). The same report explained that the Democratic Resistance Alliance (Alliance pour la résistance démocratique, ARD) consisted mainly of Bembe militia and aimed "to liberate eastern Congo from Tutsis and foreigners" (ISS n.d.).	
Proactive Disclosure		

No information on the existence of a group called Emo Imbondo or on demonstrations that may have been held in Baraka on 6 and 13 May 2004 could 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 additional sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

#### References

Agence France Presse (AFP). 15 June 2004. Esdras Ndikumana. "Les Congolais fuient les violences pour se réfugier au Burundi." (Dialog)

Institute for Security Studies (ISS). n.d. "Democratic Republic of Congo: Security Information." <<http://www.iss.co.za/AF/profiles/DRCongo/SecInfo.html>> [Accessed 28 Sept. 2004]

*Le Soir* [Brussels]. 29 September 2004. Telephone interview with a journalist who specializes in the African Great Lakes Region.

\_\_\_\_\_. 17 June 2004. "UN Food Relief Agency Helping Congolese Refugees Fleeing to Burundi, Rwanda." (Dialog/AllAfrica)

United Nations. 15 June 2004. Office of the Special Advisor on Africa (OSAA). "Thousands of Congolese Refugees Continue to Flood Into Burundi, UN Says." <[http://www.un.org/esa/africa/UNNews\\_Africa/swelled.htm](http://www.un.org/esa/africa/UNNews_Africa/swelled.htm)> [Accessed 30 Sept. 2004]

#### Additional Sources Consulted

**Publications** : *Africa Confidential*, *Africa Research Bulletin*, *Jeune Afrique/L'Intelligent*, *Keesing's Record of World Events*, Resource Centre country file.

**Internet sites, including**: Africetime, AllAfrica, Amnesty International, Digitalcongo.net, FIDH, Héritiers de la justice, HRW, MISNA, ReliefWeb.

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