



RESPONSES TO INFORMATION REQUESTS (RIRs)

[New Search](#) | [About RIRs](#) | [Help](#)

26 June 2006

COG101518.FE

Republic of the Congo: The practice of female genital mutilation (FGM), particularly whether a woman can be forced to undergo FGM against her will and that of her parents; the consequences of refusing to undergo FGM; the possibility of filing a complaint and state protection available (June 2006)

Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

A Congolese educational psychologist who is a researcher at the Union for the Study of and Research on Population and Development (Union pour l'étude et la recherche sur la population et le développement, UERPOD), a Congolese non-governmental organization based in Brazzaville, indicated, during a 19 June 2006 telephone interview, that none of the ethnic groups in the Republic of the Congo practises female genital mutilation (FGM). She also stated that ethnic groups that still celebrate rites of passage mark young girls by [translation] "slashing" their bodies, particularly their face (facial markings), but that the genitals are never marked (UERPOD 19 June 2006). The UERPOD researcher has published several studies on the situation of Congolese women, including one on girls dropping out of school and the consequences they face (Planeteafrique.com 5 Aug. 2005) and one on harassment and sexual violence against Congolese girls and women in schools and universities (ROCARE 6-10 Mar. 2006).

A Congolese writer currently living in Montreal indicated in correspondence she sent to the Research Directorate that the [translation] "practice [of female genital mutilation (FGM)] does not exist in Congolese culture" (Writer 19 June 2006). However, she did not dismiss the possibility that some communities in the Republic of the Congo consisting of Muslims from abroad may [translation] "secretly" practise such mutilations in keeping with the culture of their country of origin (ibid.). The writer has a Master's degree in international relations and political science (UWA 8 Mar. 2006; Marche mondiale des femmes 12 Oct. 2005). A member of several literary associations, including the Association of French-Language Writers (Association des écrivains de langue française), the International Council for Francophone Studies (Conseil international d'études francophones) and the Union of African Authors and Artists in Canada (Union des auteurs et artistes africains au Canada) (UWA 8 Mar. 2006; Marche mondiale des femmes 12 Oct. 2005), the writer is also a freelance journalist, is interested in gender issues and has researched the integration of African women in Quebec (UWA 8 Mar. 2006).

Published sources corroborate the statements from the two oral sources noted above. *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2005* indicates that FGM is illegal and is not practised by the Congolese (*Country Reports 2005* 8 Mar. 2006, Sec. 5). However, the same report adds that some West Africans

living in the Republic of the Congo may practise it (ibid.). The Website for the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) notes that, in the Republic of the Congo, [translation] "female genital mutilation does not seem to exist" (n.d.). According to the transcript of a program that aired on Télé-Congo on 6 February 2006 that was posted on the Congo-Site.info Website, a statement from the Congolese National Committee for Women's Rights (Comité national des droits de la femme) condemned excision and stated that in the [translation] "Congo, the practice of excision does not exist, but it seems that some communities of foreigners living in the Congo do practise it."

No information on the practice of genital mutilation among foreigners living in the Republic of Congo 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

Congo-site.info. 6 February 2006. "Retransmission du journal de 20 h Télé-Congo, du lundi 06 February 2006." <http://www.congo-site.info/index.php?action=article&id_article=294345&PHPSESSID=08a4112ef5580c20bb1d1f44e8e9feaa> [Accessed 16 June 2006]

Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2005. 8 March 2006. "Congo, Republic of." United States Department of State. Washington, DC. <<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2005/61564.htm>> [Accessed 21 June 2006]

Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). N.d. "Législation et autres textes de droit interne : Cameroun, Canada, Cap-Vert, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire." <<http://www.ipu.org/wmn-f/fgm-prov-c.htm>> [Accessed 20 June 2006]

Marche mondiale des femmes. 12 October 2005. "Toutes ensemble : les femmes s'unissent à la recherche d'un autre monde." <http://www.marchemondiale.org/actions/2005/ecrivaines/cmicle.2005-10-12.5921824941/fr/base_view> [Accessed 19 June 2006]

Planeteafrique.com. 5 August 2005. Constance Mathurine Mafoukila. "La déscolarisation des filles à Brazzaville, causes, conséquences et perspectives." <http://www.planeteafrique.com/lacollecte/news_print.asp?pcmd=articleprint&articleid=283> [Accessed 20 June 2006]

Réseau ouest et centre africain de recherches en éducation (ROCARE). 6-10 March 2006. *Éducation, violences, conflits et perspectives de paix en Afrique*. International conference organized in Yaoundé, Cameroon, from 6 to 10 March 2006. <http://www.rocare.org/programme_colloque.pdf> [Accessed 20 June 2006]

Union pour l'étude et la recherche sur la population et le développement

(UERPOD). 19 June 2006. Telephone interview with a researcher.

University of Western Australia (UWA). 8 March 2006. "Écrivaines par ordre alphabétique." <<http://www.arts.uwa.edu.au/AFLIT/FEMECalphabetique.html>> [Accessed 20 June 2006]

Writer. 19 June 2006. Correspondence sent to the Research Directorate.

Additional Sources Consulted

Internet sites, including: AllAfrica, Amnesty International, CEDAW, *CIA World Factbook*, *Les Dépêches de Brazzaville*, European Country of Origin Information Network (ECOI.net), Factiva, Famafrigue, Feminist Women's Health Center, Human Rights Watch, Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN), Inter-African Committee on Traditional Practices (IAC), International Women's Health Coalition (IWHC), UNICEF, UNIFEM, United States Department of State, Women Living Under Muslim Laws, World Health Organization (WHO).

The attached reproduction is a copy of an official work that is published by the Government of Canada. The reproduction has not been produced in affiliation with, or with the endorsement of the Government of Canada.