



Australian Government
Refugee Review Tribunal

Country Advice

Congo (Brazzaville)

Congo (Brazzaville) – COG38199 –
Bakongo – Lari – Mbochi – Nzabi – Ninja
Rebels – Cobra Militia – Pascal Lissouba –
Denis Sassou-Nguesso – Bernard Kolélas –
Former Lissouba Employees – Family
Members – Returnees – Zimbabwe – State
Protection
24 February 2011

1. Please provide some background on the Republic of Congo including key basic facts about the population, economy, major cities and geography, the ethnic composition of the population, the type of government and administration, and religions.

Demography

Population	3,768,000 (2007 UN Estimate)
Ethnic Groups	Kongo 51.4%, Téké 17.2%, Mbochi 11.4%, Mbédé 4.7%, Punu 2.9%, Sanga 2.5%, Maka 1.8, Pygmy 1.4%, Other 6.7%
Languages	French (official), Kituba, Lingala
Cities	Brazzaville 856,410 Pointe-Noire 455,131 Loubomo 79,852
Life Expectancy	54.4 years (2005)
Infant Mortality	108 per 1000 live births
HIV/AIDS	5.3% (16-49 age group)
Religion	54% Roman Catholic, 46% Animist and small communities of Protestant Christians, Muslims ^{1 2}

Economy

The Republic of Congo has an economy based on agriculture, forestry, oil production and some mining (most notably gold extraction). Oil is the largest contributor to foreign earnings. In 2007 the World Bank estimated that the country's Gross National Income (GNI) was \$US3.8 billion, or \$US950 per capita. In 2005 the Republic of Congo was ranked 139th in the world in the Human Development Index.³

¹ 'The Republic of Congo' 2008, in *The Europa World Year Book Volume I*, ed J. Maher, Routledge, London, p.1375, p1380 – Attachment 1

² US Department of State 2010, *Report on International Religious Freedom – Congo*, 17 November – Attachment 2

³ 'The Republic of Congo' 2008, in *The Europa World Year Book Volume I*, ed J. Maher, Routledge, London, p.1375, p1380 – Attachment 1

In 2008 the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank reported that the government has “inadequate internal controls and accounting systems”, allowing corruption to flourish. In 2009 the Republic of Congo was ranked 162 out of 180 countries surveyed in Transparency International’s 2009 Corruption Perceptions Index.⁴

Government

The Republic of Congo is not a genuine plural democracy. Presidential and parliamentary elections are frequently marred by irregularities, opposition boycotts and disqualifications, and the country does not have an independent electoral commission. The current ruler is President Denis Sassou-Nguesso, who has been in office since he seized power in 1997. Sassou-Nguesso previously ruled the state from 1979 to 1992. Pascal Lissouba, elected President in 1992, was deposed by Sassou-Nguesso in October 1997.⁵

In July 2009, President Denis Sassou-Nguesso won another seven year term in presidential elections, reportedly with 80 percent of the vote. According to Amnesty International, “[o]pposition political parties and other civil society organisations criticised the elections as unfair. Several opposition presidential candidates were barred by the electoral commission from standing on the grounds that they did not fulfil all the requisite conditions.” Following the elections, Sassou-Nguesso abolished the post of prime minister, officially becoming both head of state and head of government.⁶

2. Please provide information on the nature and extent of any ethnic and religious differences, disputation, and violence occurring in the Republic of Congo with particular reference to the Kongo ethnic group and to the Christians.

The Republic of Congo is religiously diverse. The US Department of State writes that approximately 50 percent of the population is Christian, of whom an estimated 90 percent are Roman Catholic. Other Christians include “Methodists, Seventh-day Adventists, members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons), and Jehovah’s Witnesses.” Of the non-Christians, the great majority are animist, and there is a small but growing Muslim community, estimated at 2 percent of the population. There is also a small population of persons, particularly among the Lari, who follow mystical or messianic practices. The Department reports that these mystical/messianic groups “have been associated with opposition political movements.” Despite this diversity and the association of messianic mystics with political opposition, the Department stated that in 2009 “[t]here were no reports of societal abuses or discrimination based on religious affiliation, belief, or practice.”⁷

The Republic of Congo does, however, have a post-colonial history tainted by ethnic and regional conflict. For much of the post-colonial era, the country has been politically and militarily dominated by the northern Mbochi minority. Despite forming only approximately 11 percent of the population, the Mbochi dominate the officer corps of the army. Between 1969 and 1993 the Mbochi dominated power. President Pascal Lissouba,

⁴ Freedom House 2010, *Freedom in the World – Congo, Republic of (Brazzaville)*, UNHCR Refworld, 3 May <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4c0ceaf9c.html> – Accessed 17 February 2011 – Attachment 3

⁵ Freedom House 2010, *Freedom in the World – Congo, Republic of (Brazzaville)*, UNHCR Refworld, 3 May <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4c0ceaf9c.html> – Accessed 17 February 2011 – Attachment 3

⁶ Amnesty International 2010, *Annual Report – Congo (Republic of)*, 3 June, p.112 – Attachment 4

⁷ US Department of State 2010, *Report on International Religious Freedom – Congo, Republic of the*, 17 November – Attachment 2

an ethnic Nzabi, sought to end Mbochi dominance of the armed forces, as well as disarm and integrate the various ethnic militias. According to the *Political Handbook of the World*, “Lissouba declared that the military would be restructured to reflect a ‘tribal and regional equilibrium’... however, the military leadership and opposition strenuously objected to the plan, particularly efforts to integrate Lissouba loyalists.”⁸

In 1997 Lissouba once again attempted to dilute Mbochi power by attempting to disarm the Cobra militia. The Mbochi, led by former ruler Sassou-Nguesso, attacked forces loyal to Lissouba and Bernard Kolélas (Lissouba’s rival in the second round of presidential elections in 1992). Militia fighters loyal to Kolélas were largely drawn from the Lari sub-group of the Bakongo, the country’s largest ethnic group. Sassou-Nguesso, with the help of the army, the Cobra militia, and Angolan troops, took control of Brazzaville and appointed himself President.⁹

In 2002, while Sassou-Nguesso was abroad, the Reverend Frédéric Ntumi’s Lari ‘Ninja’ rebels attacked Brazzaville. Sassou-Nguesso was able to repel the attack, however the Ninjas continued their sporadic attacks in the country’s Pool region, which surrounds the capital, for a number of years (see Map). Former Ninja rebels continue to be accused of crimes in the Pool and Pointe Noire regions.^{10 11}

Today, ethnic groups in the Republic of Congo continue to align themselves with particular politicians; however it would be simplistic to see politics in the republic as strictly divided along ethnic lines. During both civil wars ethnic subgroups have supported different and often opposing alliances.

Ethnicity in the Republic of Congo

- The Bakongo (also known as the Kongo) are the largest ethnic group in the republic, particularly in the volatile Pool region. The Bakongo have a number of subgroups, of which the Lari are the largest.
- The Lari have traditionally sided with Bernard Kolélas. The main Lari militia group during the 1997 and 2002-2004 conflicts were ‘the Ninja’s.’
- The Vili, another sub-group of the Bakongo, have not supported the Ninjas. Denis Sassou-Nguesso’s wife is a Vili.
- Former President Lissouba is an Nzabi, a sub-group of the M’bebe. Nzabi and other southern ethnic groups have their own militia, known as the Cocoyes.
- The Batéké are the second largest ethnic group.
- The Boulanguis are the third largest of the main ethnic groups. The Mbochi are the largest sub-group of the Boulanguis, accounting for 14 percent of the country’s population. Denis Sassou-Nguesso is M’Bochi.^{12 13}

⁸ ‘Republic of the Congo’ 2010, *Political Handbook of the World Online Edition*, CQ Press Electronic Library, p.328 – Attachment 5

⁹ ‘The Republic of Congo’ 2008, in *The Europa World Year Book Volume I*, ed J. Maher, Routledge, London, p.1375 – Attachment 1

¹⁰ ‘The Republic of Congo’ 2008, in *The Europa World Year Book Volume I*, ed J. Maher, Routledge, London, p.1375 – Attachment 1

¹¹ ‘Ninja return ends in Congo chaos’ 2007, *BBC News*, 11 September
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/6988679.stm> – Accessed 23 February 2011 – Attachment 6

¹² UK Home Office 2002, *The Republic of Congo Country Assessment*, October, Section 6.44
<http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/pdfid/3df4aad0.pdf> – Accessed 18 February 2011 – Attachment 7

- Member of the M'Bochi and related Boulangui clans dominates political power in the Republic of Congo, due largely to the fact that they also dominate the officer corps of the military.¹⁴
- Both Freedom House and the US Department of State report that all ethnic groups practice discrimination in their own regions. Both sources state that the most marginalised ethnic group in the country are Pygmies, also known as the Bambenga. Pygmies comprises approximately 1.5 percent of the population and live in the most remote parts of the country. Pygmy marginalisation is the result of both geographic isolation and social attitudes of the majority Bantu tribes.^{15 16}

Political Allegiances

- Lissouba and his political party, the Union Panafricaine pour la Démocratie Sociale (UPADS), were primarily backed by the so-called Nibolek region (which comprises the administrative units of Niari, Bouenza and Lekoumou) in the central-southern part of the country, which is inhabited by a number of ethnic groups, including the Bemba, Teke and Nzabi.
- Kolélas and his Mouvement Congolais pour la Démocratie et le Développement Intégral (MCDDI) had their strongholds in the Bakongo population, especially the Lari subgroup, in Brazzaville and the surrounding Pool region.
- Sassou-Nguesso, who heads the Congolese Labor Party (PCT), and the majority of the country's military officers had their roots in the Mbochi ethnic group of the central-northern part of the country. The Mbochi constitute a minority of about 12%. Given their supremacy in the military, however, they are a much stronger power in the country than their numbers might suggest.¹⁷

3. Please provide information on the conflict of 1997. What happened and who was it between? Is there information to suggest that Congolese people fled Congo to Zimbabwe during this period?

In 1997 the Republic of Congo erupted into civil war, with sides largely delineated along regional and ethnic lines. The war was essentially about which regional and ethnic groups would control both the government and the military. *BBC News* suggests that control of the country's off-shore oil wealth was a primary motivating factor.¹⁸

¹³ 'Republic of the Congo' 2010, *Political Handbook of the World Online Edition*, CQ Press Electronic Library, p.329 – Attachment 5

¹⁴ Bertelsmann Stiftung 2009, *BTI 2010 — Congo, Republic of the Country Report*, 6 November, p.4 http://www.bertelsmann-transformation-index.de/fileadmin/pdf/Gutachten_BTI2010/WCA/Congo_Republic_of_the.pdf – Accessed 18 February 2011 – Attachment 8

¹⁵ Freedom House 2010, *Freedom in the World – Congo, Republic of (Brazzaville)*, UNHCR Refworld, 3 May <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4c0ceaf9c.html> – Accessed 17 February 2011.

¹⁶ US Department of State 2010, *Report on International Religious Freedom – Congo, Republic of the*, 17 November, Section 5.

¹⁷ Bertelsmann Stiftung 2009, *BTI 2010 — Congo, Republic of the Country Report*, 6 November, p.4 http://www.bertelsmann-transformation-index.de/fileadmin/pdf/Gutachten_BTI2010/WCA/Congo_Republic_of_the.pdf – Accessed 18 February 2011 – Attachment 8

¹⁸ 'Republic of Congo country profile' 2010, *BBC News*, 30 November http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/country_profiles/1076794.stm – Accessed 22 February 2011.

For a large part of independence, the Mbochi clan has dominated political power in the Republic of Congo. This power was largely due to the fact that the Mbochi also dominated the officer corps of the military.¹⁹ The Mbochi junta espoused a Marxist ideology and subsequently received assistance from the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics during the Cold War. The end of the Cold War saw the junta abandon such ideology and lose Soviet patronage. Consequently, the Mbochi dictator Denis Sassou-Nguesso agreed to hold elections in 1992.²⁰

In the first round of voting, Sassou-Nguesso ran third, receiving only 16.9 percent of the vote; he was therefore ineligible to run in the second round. Former Prime Minister Pascal Lissouba, a member of the Nzabi ethnic minority, won the presidency in the second round with 62 percent of the vote. His opponent was the Lari (Bakongo) candidate, Bernard Kolélas.²¹

May 1993 parliamentary elections were won by Lissouba's UPADS party, with 62 percent going to the party and its allies. However, the Supreme Court ruled that irregularities had taken place and ordered fresh elections. New elections in October 1993 saw almost exactly the same result. In late 1993 Lissouba, Sassou-Nguesso and Kolélas signed a peace accord.²²

In 1997 a coalition of opposition parties, headed by Sassou-Nguesso, presented a list of demands to President Lissouba. Lissouba responded by once again attempting to disarm Sassou-Nguesso's ethnic Mbochi Cobra militia. It was this act that sparked the four month long civil war.²³

In October 1997, Lissouba and Kolélas attempted to form a government of national unity, prompting Sassou-Nguesso to launch an offensive with the assistance the Cobra militia and Angolans troops. The same month Sassou-Nguesso's coalition forces took control of Brazzaville and he appointed himself President. He has remained in power ever since, due in large part to financial resources derived from oil rents.²⁴

Despite officially lasting four months, [armed conflict between] militias loyal to Lissouba and Kolélas (the Cocoyes in the south and Ninjas in the central Pool region) continued to battle the Cobra militias and the army, both of which supported Sassou-Nguesso. The ongoing conflict caused thousands of deaths and continued to create a steady stream of people fleeing Brazzaville. By mid-1999 the Cobras and the army had clearly gained the upper hand, by which time Sassou-Nguesso offered an amnesty to all opposition militiamen who surrendered their arms. The offer was rejected by Lissouba and Kolélas,

¹⁹ Bertelsmann Stiftung 2009, *BTI 2010 — Congo, Republic of the Country Report*, 6 November, p.4 http://www.bertelsmann-transformation-index.de/fileadmin/pdf/Gutachten_BTI2010/WCA/Congo_Republic_of_the.pdf – Accessed 18 February 2011 – Attachment 8

²⁰ 'The Republic of Congo' 2008, in *The Europa World Year Book Volume I*, ed J. Maher, Routledge, London, p.1375 – Attachment 1

²¹ 'The Republic of Congo' 2008, in *The Europa World Year Book Volume I*, ed J. Maher, Routledge, London, p.1375 – Attachment 1

²² 'The Republic of Congo' 2008, in *The Europa World Year Book Volume I*, ed J. Maher, Routledge, London, p.1375 – Attachment 1

²³ 'The Republic of Congo' 2008, in *The Europa World Year Book Volume I*, ed J. Maher, Routledge, London, p.1375 – Attachment 1

²⁴ Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre 2009, *Congo: Peace and oil dividends fail to benefit remaining IDPs and other vulnerable populations*, UNHCR Refworld, 25 September <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4abcaf652.html> – Accessed 21 February 2011, p.18 – Attachment 10

however was accepted by the majority of opposition militia members. The conflict is thought to have claimed at least 20,000 deaths and created some 800,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs).²⁵

During the conflict Pascal Lissouba fled Congo and has reportedly lived in exile in France ever since. Lissouba was tried *in absentia* and sentenced to 30 years in prison.^{26 27} Kolélas also fled and was sentenced to death *in absentia*. In 2005 Kolélas was granted an amnesty.²⁸

No information has been located that indicates that Zimbabwe was a common destination for persons fleeing the conflict. It is well documented that many thousands of Congo citizens fled to neighbouring Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) during this time.^{29 30}

4. Please provide information on whether people have been targeted for harm because of their status as former employees of the Lissouba government.

There are no reports that former employees of the Lissouba government have been harmed upon return to the Republic of Congo. In October 2002, five years after the civil war that saw the ousting of the Lissouba government, the UK Home Office reported that both former cabinet ministers and civil servants in the Lissouba government “that are members of ethnic groups who opposed the government [have] been allowed back into their posts.”³¹

In the first few years after the civil war, there were reports that a number of male refugees returning from the DRC were separated from their families and summarily executed by militias; in 1999 the US Department of State wrote that “[t]here were numerous reported cases of summary execution of suspected rebels among displaced civilians, most of whom were southerners, as they returned from other countries to which they had fled or emerged from forests or other places of refuge within the country. Young men were singled out for beatings or execution, and women were raped routinely. There were reports that in May members of the security forces shot and killed men a group of who were separated from groups of returning refugees.”³²

²⁵ ‘Republic of the Congo’ 2010, *Political Handbook of the World Online Edition*, CQ Press Electronic Library, p.329 – Attachment 5

²⁶ ‘Congolese ex-leader guilty of treason’ 2001, *BBC News*, 29 December

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/1732822.stm> – Accessed 17 February 2011 – Attachment 11

²⁷ US Department of State 2010, *Country Reports on Human Rights practices 2009 – Congo (Republic of)*, 11 March – Attachment 12

²⁸ ‘Amnesty passed for Congo’s ex-PM’ 2002, *BBC News*, 24 November

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/4467118.stm> – Accessed 18 February 2011 – Attachment 13

²⁹ ‘The Republic of Congo’ 2008, in *The Europa World Year Book Volume I*, ed J. Maher, Routledge, London, pp.1379-1380 – Attachment 1

³⁰ Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre 2009, *Congo: Peace and oil dividends fail to benefit remaining IDPs and other vulnerable populations*, UNHCR Refworld, 25 September

<http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4abcaf652.html> – Accessed 21 February 2011, p.48 – Attachment 10

³¹ UK Home Office 2002, *The Republic of Congo Country Assessment*, October, Section 6.44

<http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/pdfid/3df4aad0.pdf> – Accessed 18 February 2011 – Attachment 7

³² US Department of State 2000, *Country Reports of Human Rights Practices 1999 – The Republic of Congo*, 25 February – Attachment 14

According to the US Department of State, there have been no reports that the government or its agents committed arbitrary or unlawful killings, or was behind any politically motivated disappearances in recent years.³³

There have been reports that high ranking members of the former president's political party, the PanAfrican Union for Social Democracy (UPADS), have had their civil rights infringed, particularly their freedom of movement. Following the 2009 elections, former prime minister Ange Edouard Pongui and UPADS Secretary-General Pascal Tsaty Mabiala were prevented from travelling to France. In July 2009 the former opposition leader and Lissouba loyalist, General Ferdinand Mbaou, was arrested and charged with "breaching national security." Gilbert Nsonguissa, "an advisor to the exiled former minister of finance Nguila MOUNGOUNGA Nkombo", was arrested in September 2008. He was released three months later and was allowed to return to exile in France.³⁴

5. Is there information on whether family members of former employees of the previous government have been killed for imputed political reasons?

There is no evidence that family members of former employees of the Lissouba government are being killed or have ever been targeted for killing in the Republic of Congo. There is no evidence that former employees of the Lissouba government have been killed.

In 1998 and 1999 a number of returnees from the DRC disappeared from Brazzaville and were presumed to have been killed on suspicion of being former opposition militia members.³⁵ In June 1999 the International Federation for Human Rights accused troops loyal to the Sassou-Nguesso government "of massacring between 5,000 and 6,000 people on the grounds of political allegiance, ethnic or regional backgrounds."³⁶

As mentioned previously, the UK Home Office reported in 2002 that both former cabinet ministers and civil servants in the Lissouba government "that are members of ethnic groups who opposed the government [have] been allowed back into their posts."³⁷

6. Please provide information on any ethnic differences between members/employees/supporters of the former Lissouba government and the current Sassou-Nguesso government.

As mentioned previously, the former President Pascal Lissouba is from the Nzabi sub-group of the M'bebe. He won power largely with the support of a variety of ethnic groups and subgroups from the southern half of the country. Current President Denis Sassou-Nguesso is a member of the M'Bochi sub-group of the Boulangui. His power is largely

³³ US Department of State 2010, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 2009 – The Republic of Congo*, 11 March, Section 1.e – Attachment 12

³⁴ 'Congo: Post-election clampdown on opposition' 2009, UNHCR Refworld, source: *IRIN News*, 9 October <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4ad333a91a.html> – Accessed 17 February 2011 – Attachment 15

³⁵ US Department of State 2000, *Country Reports of Human Rights Practices 1999 – The Republic of Congo*, 25 February – Attachment 14

³⁶ Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre 2009, *Congo: Peace and oil dividends fail to benefit remaining IDPs and other vulnerable populations*, UNHCR Refworld, 25 September <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4abcaf652.html> – Accessed 21 February 2011, p.20 – Attachment 10

³⁷ UK Home Office 2002, *The Republic of Congo Country Assessment*, October, Section 6.44 <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/pdfid/3df4aad0.pdf> – Accessed 18 February 2011 – Attachment 7

derived from support from northern ethnic groups and the military, which is dominated by the Mbochi.

The cabinet of Sassou-Nguesso is said to be dominated by Mbochi and other northern groups. The cabinet of Lissouba was more mixed, however it included a number of people from various Bakongo sub-clans.³⁸

According to Minorities at Risk, the Lari enjoyed power following decolonisation under presidents Abbe Fulbert Youlou and Alphonse Massamba-Debat. Power switched to the Mbochi under Denis Sassou-Nguesso and back to southerners in 1992. Following the civil war in 1997, power has returned to the Mbochi. Since then, Minorities at Risk argues that “the Lari have faced considerable political discrimination, as Nguesso favors his own ethnic group within the government”. However, it also adds that “[d]espite the political discrimination, the Lari are not economically discriminated against.” It is therefore their political disenfranchisement that fuels support for groups such as the Ninjas.³⁹

7. Is there any information about anyone being killed in Congo because they were regarded as “being a puppet of the previous government.”?

No sources located state that former employees of the Lissouba regime have been killed or harmed since the 1997 civil war ended on suspicion of “being a puppet” of the former regime. Amnesty International has reported that “dozens of suspected or known supporters of former President Lissouba and former Prime Minister Kolélas have been detained for up to two years and released without charge or trial” and adds that “[s]everal of those arrested died in custody.”⁴⁰

As stated previously, the UK Home Office reported several years after the end of the 1997 civil war that both former cabinet ministers and civil servants in the Lissouba government were allowed to return to their posts.⁴¹ The US Department of State wrote in March 2010 that there have been no reports of unlawful killings or politically motivated disappearances carried out by the government or its agents in recent years.⁴²

8. Have family members of former employees of the Lissouba government been targeted for harm by members of the general population?

There are no reports that members of the general community have targeted former employees of the Lissouba government. There are no reports of politically motivated extra-judicial killings by ‘society’. What is reportedly common in remote areas is local inhabitants taking “the law into their own hands to punish persons presumed or known to be police or military personnel who looted civilian residences”. Such local punishment has reportedly resulted in deaths or serious injuries.⁴³

³⁸ UK Home Office 2002, *The Republic of Congo Country Assessment*, October, Section 6.44

<http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/pdfid/3df4aad0.pdf> – Accessed 18 February 2011 – Attachment 7

³⁹ Minorities at Risk 2003, ‘Assessment for Lari in the Rep. of the Congo’, 31 December – Attachment 16

⁴⁰ Amnesty International 2006, ‘Congo: Political detainees in legal limbo’, 13 December, p.3 – Attachment 17

⁴¹ UK Home Office 2002, *The Republic of Congo Country Assessment*, October, Section 6.44

<http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/pdfid/3df4aad0.pdf> – Accessed 18 February 2011 – Attachment 7

⁴² US Department of State 2010, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 2009 – The Republic of Congo*, 11 March, Section 1.e – Attachment 12

⁴³ US Department of State 2000, *Country Reports of Human Rights Practices 1999 – The Republic of Congo*, 25 February – Attachment 14

9. Please provide information on the nature and effectiveness of the police and protection authorities in Congo.

According to the US Department of State, the forces responsible for security in the Republic of Congo include the police, gendarmerie, and military. The police are primarily responsible for maintaining order in the cities, while the gendarmerie has responsibility in other areas. The military forces are responsible for external security, however they are also said to have some domestic security responsibilities. The minister of defence is responsible for the military forces and gendarmerie, while the minister of security oversees the police.⁴⁴

The Department comments that the professionalism of the various security forces continues to improve, “in large part due to training by the international law enforcement community.” The government is said to maintain effective control of the security forces, however abuses by these forces do take place.⁴⁵

The Republic of Congo police have been accused of arresting people on politically motivated charges. However, most of these arrests have been of actual members of the current opposition, rather than former employees of the Lissouba government. Those arrested on suspected politically motivated charges include opposition members Malgala Sabin, Douniama-Etou Jean Ferenzi, and Ernest Ngalou in 2009; Lissouba loyalist General Ferdinand Mbaou in 2009; and Gilbert Nsonguissa, “an advisor to the exiled former minister of finance Nguila MOUNGOUNGA NKOMBO.”⁴⁶

⁴⁴ US Department of State 2010, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 2009 – The Republic of Congo*, 11 March, Section 1.e – Attachment 12

⁴⁵ US Department of State 2010, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 2009 – The Republic of Congo*, 11 March, Section 1.e – Attachment 12

⁴⁶ US Department of State 2010, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 2009 – The Republic of Congo*, 11 March, Section 1.e – Attachment 12

Attachments

1. 'The Republic of Congo' 2008, in *The Europa World Year Book Volume I*, ed J. Maher, Routledge, London. (MRT-RRT Library)
2. US Department of State 2010, *Report on International Religious Freedom – Congo*, 17 November.
3. Freedom House 2010, *Freedom in the World – Congo, Republic of (Brazzaville)*, UNHCR Refworld, 3 May <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4c0ceaf9c.html> – Accessed 17 February 2011.
4. Amnesty International 2010, *Annual Report – Congo (Republic of)*, 3 June.
5. 'Republic of the Congo' 2010, *Political Handbook of the World Online Edition*, CQ Press Electronic Library.
6. 'Ninja return ends in Congo chaos' 2007, *BBC News*, 11 September <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/6988679.stm> – Accessed 23 February 2011.
7. UK Home Office 2002, *The Republic of Congo Country Assessment*, October <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/pdfid/3df4aad0.pdf> – Accessed 18 February 2011.
8. Bertelsmann Stiftung 2009, *BTI 2010 – Congo, Republic of the Country Report*, 6 November http://www.bertelsmann-transformation-index.de/fileadmin/pdf/Gutachten_BTI2010/WCA/Congo_Republic_of_the.pdf – Accessed 18 February 2011.
9. 'Republic of Congo country profile' 2010, *BBC News*, 30 November http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/country_profiles/1076794.stm – Accessed 22 February 2011.
10. Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre 2009, *Congo: Peace and oil dividends fail to benefit remaining IDPs and other vulnerable populations*, UNHCR Refworld, 25 September <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4abcaf652.html> – Accessed 21 February 2011.
11. 'Congolese ex-leader guilty of treason' 2001, *BBC News*, 29 December <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/1732822.stm> – Accessed 17 February 2011.
12. US Department of State 2010, *Country Reports on Human Rights practices 2009 – Congo (Republic of)*, 11 March.
13. 'Amnesty passed for Congo's ex-PM' 2002, *BBC News*, 24 November <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/4467118.stm> – Accessed 18 February 2011.
14. US Department of State 2000, *Country Reports of Human Rights Practices 1999 – The Republic of Congo*, 25 February.
15. 'Congo: Post-election clampdown on opposition' 2009, UNHCR Refworld, source: *IRIN News*, 9 October <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4ad333a91a.html> – Accessed 17 February 2011.

16. Minorities at Risk 2003, 'Assessment for Lari in the Rep. of the Congo', 31 December. (CISNET Congo CX180062)
17. Amnesty International 2006, 'Congo: Political detainees in legal limbo', 13 December.