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## RESPONSES TO INFORMATION REQUESTS (RIRs)

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7 April 2008

**COD102785.FE**

Democratic Republic of the Congo: Membership cards for the Union for Democracy and Social Progress (Union pour la démocratie et le progrès social, UDPS), including the content of these cards; who may issue UDPS membership cards and whether any new cards have been issued since 2003

Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

The information below was provided by the Representative in Canada of the Union for Democracy and Social Progress (Union pour la démocratie et le progrès social, UDPS) in correspondence sent to the Research Directorate on 3 March 2008:

[translation]

The UDPS is supposed to issue UDPS membership cards to members who request them. In fact, from April 1990 to December 2007, the UDPS wanted its members to have membership cards, but because of the distances involved-some members, particularly in the DRC [Democratic Republic of the Congo] interior, live very far from the centres where the cards are kept-it has not always been easy for those who claim to belong the UDPS to obtain membership cards. Therefore, membership certifications have at times been issued by local officials to provide proof of membership.

However, since December 2007, the UDPS has required its members to purchase a membership or support card called a UDPS First Congress Card (*Carte 1er Congrès de l'UDPS*). That requirement nullified, for 2008, all previously issued UDPS cards and certification documents. Efforts to inform the public and to distribute these cards in all areas of the DRC and in all UDPS foreign branches were carried out by UDPS headquarters. In Canada, we launched the official distribution campaign for these cards in Montréal on 9 February 2008.

The UDPS Representative in Canada provided the Research Directorate with a sample of a membership card (*carte de member*) that expired on 31 December 2005, a sample of the special card from the first congress (*carte spéciale du premier congrès*) and a sample of the supporter's card from the first congress (*carte de soutien du premier congrès*), copies of which are attached. Although these copies make the cards appear to be in black and white, the top portion of each card is actually in colour.

A number of sources state that in November 2007, the UDPS began issuing special cards for the party's first congress (*La Prospérité* 16 Feb. 2008; *L'Observateur* 19 Nov. 2007; UDPS Online 22 Feb. 2008; *Le Phare* 19 Nov. 2007; *Le Potentiel* 20 Nov. 2007). According to some sources, the UDPS issues two types of cards that allow the holder to attend its first congress -- a special first-congress card and a first-congress supporter's card (*L'Observateur* 19 Nov. 2007; *Le Phare* 19 Nov. 2007; *Le Potentiel* 20 Nov. 2007); these cards will remain valid until 31 December 2008 (*L'Observateur* 19 Nov. 2007; *Le Potentiel* 20 Nov. 2007; see also *Le Phare* 19 Nov. 2007). The first-congress supporter's card is issued to UDPS members in the DRC or abroad, at a cost of twenty United States (US) dollars (*ibid.*; *L'Observateur* 19 Nov. 2007; *Le Potentiel* 20 Nov. 2007), [translation] "by all party components" (*L'Observateur* 19 Nov. 2007). The special first-congress card is issued only to UDPS members who are in the DRC, at a cost of two US dollars (*Le Potentiel*

20 Nov. 2007; *Le Phare* 19 Nov. 2007; see also *L'Observateur* 19 Nov. 2007), [translation] "by the cells and sections" of the party (*Le Phare* 19 Nov. 2007; *L'Observateur* 19 Nov. 2007). As for non-members who support the party, the UDPS has asked for a contribution of one US dollar from those who are in the DRC, and ten US dollars from those who are outside the country, but the sources do not indicate whether these people receive a card (*Le Phare* 19 Nov. 2007; *Le Potentiel* 20 Nov. 2007).

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

*L'Observateur* [Kinshasa]. 19 November 2007. V. Wakudinga. "Tshisekedi a lancé la campagne d'organisation." <&lt;[http://www.lobservateur.cd/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=425&Itemid=33](http://www.lobservateur.cd/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=425&Itemid=33)>> [Accessed 29 Feb. 2008]

*Le Phare* [Kinshasa]. 19 November 2007. "UDPS - Tshisekedi donne le coup d'envoi de la mobilisation pour le Congrès." (AllAfrica/COMTEX/Factiva)

*Le Potentiel* [Kinshasa]. 20 November 2007. Sylvain Kapuya. "L'UDPS en campagne pour l'organisation du 1er Congrès." <&lt;[http://www.lepotentiel.com/afficher\\_article.php?id\\_edition=&id\\_article=55631](http://www.lepotentiel.com/afficher_article.php?id_edition=&id_article=55631)>> [Accessed 27 Feb. 2008]

*La Prospérité* [Kinshasa]. 16 February 2008. François Xavier Beltechika Kalubye. "26ème anniversaire de l'UDPS : Beltechika Kalubye : 'il est plus que temps de changer la gestion calamiteuse de la RDC'." <&lt;[http://www.laprosperteonline.net/affichage\\_article.php?id=4313&rubrique=Politique](http://www.laprosperteonline.net/affichage_article.php?id=4313&rubrique=Politique)>> [Accessed 27 Feb. 2008]

UDPS Online. 22 February 2008. "Grande opération de vente des cartes de soutien au premier congrès de l'UDPS." <[http://udpsonline.com/topic.php?id\\_top=5](http://udpsonline.com/topic.php?id_top=5)> [Accessed 27 Feb. 2008]

Union pour la démocratie et le progrès social (UDPS). 3 March 2008. Correspondence sent to the Research Directorate by the UDPS Representative in Canada.

## Additional Sources

**Oral Sources:** Attempts to contact the Union pour la démocratie et le progrès social (UDPS), advisors to Etienne Tshisekedi and UDPS representatives in France, Belgium and the United States were unsuccessful.

**Publication:** *Political Handbook of the World 2007*.

**Internet sites, including:** AllAfrica, *L'Avenir* [Kinshasa], European Country of Origin Information Network (ecoi.net), Factiva, Jeuneafrique.com, UDPS.net, UDPS.org, and World News Connection (WNC).

## Attachments

Union pour la démocratie et le progrès social (UDPS). N.d.a. "Carte de membre." 1 p.

\_\_\_\_\_. N.d.b. "Spécial 1er congrès." 1 p.

\_\_\_\_\_. N.d.c. "Carte de soutien." 1 p.

