



Refugee Documentation Centre (Ireland)  
LEGAL AID BOARD

**DRC - Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on Wednesday 5, Thursday 6 and Friday 7 January 2011**

**Information on treatment of the elderly and those who are infirm, including availability of state aid/assistance; financial assistance; medical help; help with housing et al**

A *BBC News* article from September 2010 states:

“Although life expectancy in the Democratic Republic of Congo remains below 50, the country does have many elderly citizens. But the turmoil in national institutions after decades of mismanagement and conflict means that only a small minority of them receive a pension” (BBC News (13 September 2010) *Lost pension hopes in DR Congo*).

A report by the *International Organisation for Migration* in November 2009 states:

“No system of housing loans exists in the DRC. The government does not provide subsidised housing although a limited number of homes for the elderly can be found in Kinshasa. People returning from abroad will receive no assistance from the government in finding accommodation and need to know that they will need to cover this cost entirely by themselves” (International Organisation for Migration (17 November 2009) *Returning to the Democratic Republic of Congo*,p.10).

This document also states:

“Elderly people are accommodated in some public homes in Kinshasa and in some provinces in the DRC, although there are not many” (ibid,p.11).

It is also noted in this document that:

“Pensions are not common in the DRC. On paper, Congolese government officials are offered access to pension plans. Larger companies used to pay pensions to retired workers, but the social security scheme is now ineffective and mainly offers advice and counselling” (ibid,p.15).

This document also reports:

“For people returning from abroad, pensions can be channelled through the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, provided that some arrangement or agreement is made before return. The Ministry can also be contacted for specialised advice on mechanisms and structures for channelling pension funds. But, there is no pension or financial assistance specifically for returnees, nor are there employment projects for returnees” (ibid,p.15).

The *Social Security Administration* in August 2009 states:

“Medical care is available for old-age pensioners and disability pensioners and their dependents in government hospitals and clinics and in the medical facilities of the National Social Security Institute” (Social Security Administration (August 2009) *Social Security Programs Throughout the World: Africa, 2009, Congo(Kinshasa)*,p.69).

The *Country of Return Information Project* in June 2009 states:

“Pension: The National Social Security Institute (INSS), in charge of pension management in DRC was created by the statutory order of 29 June 1961, from the fusion of Katanga and Lower Congo social security funds. It only covers three sections (pension, old age benefits and family allowances) instead of the nine sections explained in the Convention 102 from the WTO. Its mismanagement is characterized by:

- ? the non respect for organic status spirit
- ? State interference in management
- ? Heritage despoliation and embezzlement
- ? Insolvency of different INSS customers...” (Country of Return Information Project (June 2009) *Country Sheet, Democratic Republic of the Congo*,p.77).

A *World Bank* report published in July 2006 states:

“The shortcomings of the social protection system in the DRC are illustrated in particular by: (i) the extreme fragility of vulnerable persons in respect of various risks; (ii) poor access to basic social services, especially on the part of elderly persons who represent 3 percent of the population...” (World Bank (July 2006) *Democratic Republic of the Congo, Poverty Reduction and Growth Strategy Paper*,pp.42-43).

An undated profile published by *Spirasi* states:

“The elderly are cared for by the extended family” (Spirasi (Undated) *Congo - Democratic Republic Of Congo*).

No further information on these issues could be found among sources available to the RDC.

## References

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This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Refugee Documentation Centre within time constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

### **Sources Consulted**

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Institute of Development Studies  
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International Crisis Group  
International Federation on Aging  
International Labour Organisation

International Social Security Association  
IRIN News  
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