



Democratic Republic of the Congo – Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on 3 May 2013

Information on the possibility of internal relocation, particularly for women.

The 2013 *United States Department of State* country report on the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), in a section titled “Freedom of Movement, Internally Displaced Persons, Protection of Refugees, and Stateless Persons”, states:

“The law provides for freedom of internal movement, foreign travel, emigration, and repatriation. The government sometimes restricted these rights.” (United States Department of State (19 April 2013) *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2012: Democratic Republic of the Congo*, p.19)

In a sub-section headed “In-country Movement” this report refers to restrictions on freedom of movement imposed by the state security forces (SSF), rebel and militia groups (RMG) and the national army (FARDC) as follows:

“SSF--and to a greater extent RMG--established barriers and checkpoints on roads and at ports, airports, and markets, ostensibly for security reasons, and routinely harassed and extorted money from civilians for supposed violations, sometimes detaining them until they or a relative paid. The government required travelers to submit to immigration procedures during domestic travel at airports, ports, and when entering and leaving towns. Local authorities continued to collect illegal taxes and fees from boats traveling on many parts of the Congo River. There were also widespread reports of FARDC soldiers and RMG extorting fees from persons taking goods to market or traveling between towns. SSF sometimes required travelers to present official travel orders from an employer or government official, although the law does not require such documentation. SSF often detained individuals traveling without official orders in order to pressure bribes.” (ibid)

An *Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada* response to a request for information on methods of transportation in the DRC, in a section titled “Situation of transportation in the Democratic Republic of Congo” (section 2), states:

“Several sources consulted by the Research Directorate indicated that the transportation infrastructure in DRC is in poor condition. According to the sources consulted by the Research Directorate, there is no reliable public transport system in the DRC. Some sources also indicated that all forms of public transport in the country are unsafe. According to the tips for travellers published by the United States (U.S.) Department of State, ‘taxis, mini-buses, and trains are in poor mechanical condition and are often filled beyond capacity’. In correspondence with the Research Directorate, the secretary-general of Kivu Rise stated that the vehicles used for water, land and rail transportation are often old, some dating back to before the DRC’s independence in 1960. He also stated that trucks and other land vehicles are in poor condition because of the pitiful road conditions.” (Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (18 April 2012) *COD104021.FE – Democratic Republic of Congo: Mobility and methods of transportation between Grand Kivu and Kinshasa*)

In a section titled “Road transportation” (section 2.1) this report states:

“Sources consulted by the Research Directorate agree that the roads in the DRC are in disrepair. According to the tips for travellers published by France’s Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs (ministère des Affaires étrangères et européennes), [translation] ‘only 15 percent of the country’s road network is driveable’. Some sources indicated that the roads in the provinces surrounding Kinshasa are in particularly poor condition.” (ibid)

See also section titled “Road safety” (section 2.1.1) which states:

“Several sources indicated that there are roads with checkpoints manned by DRC security forces and that they sometimes set up temporary roadblocks, especially at night. According to the tips for travellers from the United States government, ‘vehicles are often searched for weapons and valuables, and travelers are checked for identity papers’. According to the Canadian authorities, ‘travellers may also be detained and questioned by ill-disciplined security forces at certain legitimate military roadblocks throughout the country’. The American authorities indicated that the security forces regularly demand bribes.” (ibid)

A section titled “Rail, river and lake transportation” (section 2.2) states:

“Several sources consulted by the Research Directorate advise against using rail transportation in the DRC because it is unsafe. According to the tips for travellers from the United Kingdom, travellers should be aware that ‘the boats and ferries, which serve the rivers and lakes, are poorly maintained and often overloaded. Strong currents, shifting sandbanks and poor maintenance contribute to the poor safety record of these services’” (ibid)

See also *BBC News* report which states:

“Boats and ferries are commonly used in DR Congo, which has few viable roads or railways but major lakes and rivers. However, the vessels are often overloaded or badly maintained, and accidents are commonplace.” (BBC News (29 July 2011) *DR Congo: Bodies recovered after ferry collision*)

Paragraph 72 of a critique of the United Kingdom Home Office operational guidance note on the DRC, published by the NGO *Still Human Still Here*, refers to Information taken from an email exchange with Bronwen Manby, Senior Program Advisor of AfriMAP, Open Society Foundation London, as follows:

“According to Ms Manby, ability to move around is severely compromised for those without money, vehicles etc, and especially for women” (Still Human Still Here (August 2010) *Comments on the Operational Guidance Note on Democratic Republic of Congo*, p.23)

References:

BBC News (29 July 2011) *DR Congo: Bodies recovered after ferry collision*
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-14349292?print=true>
(Accessed 3 May 2013)

Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (18 April 2012) *COD104021.FE – Democratic Republic of Congo: Mobility and methods of transportation between Grand Kivu and Kinshasa*

http://www.irb-cisr.gc.ca:8080/RIR_RDI/RIR_RDI.aspx?id=453953&l=e

(Accessed 3 May 2013)

Still Human Still Here (August 2010) *Comments on the Operational Guidance Note on Democratic Republic of Congo*

<http://www.refworld.org/docid/4cb6c6bf2.html>

(Accessed 3 May 2013)

United States Department of State (19 April 2013) *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2012: Democratic Republic of the Congo*

<http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/204319.pdf>

(Accessed 3 May 2013)

This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research and Information Unit 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:

BBC News

European Country of Origin Information Network

Freedom House

Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada

Refugee Documentation Centre Query Database

Refugee Review Tribunal

Still Human Still Here

UNHCR Refworld

United States Department of State