



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

Central Africa Team
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
King Charles Street
London SW1A 2AH

Website: <https://www.gov.uk>

15 February 2016

Your Freedom Of Information Request: 1102-15

Thank you for your request for information which we first received on 6th November 2015, and the final, amended request (which now falls within the FOI limit) on the 13th November. In your request you asked for:

- a. *In recent weeks the Congolese media has reported that two of the DRC's most prominent opposition politicians, Vital Kamerhe and Moise Katumbi, both of whom are potential candidates to succeed Joseph Kabila as president, met in the FCO. I'd like to know who attended and what was discussed?*
- b. *Additionally, would it be possible to know during 2015 which leading regime officials and individuals (as listed below) from the Congolese opposition have met with the FCO in Kinshasa and London to talk about political matters, particularly the elections slated (but unlikely) to happen in 2016 - plus what was under discussion?*

*Augustin Matata Ponyo
Vital Kamerhe (UNC)
Moise Katumbi (ex-PPRD)
Etienne Tshisekedi (UDPS)
Felix Tshisekedi (UDPS)
Albert Moleka (UDPS)
Martin Fayulu (Ecide)
Gustave Beya Siku
Thomas Luhaka (MLC)
Eve Bazaiba (MLC)
Evariste Boshab (MLC)
Antoine Ghonda
Moise Ekanga
Henri Mova Sakanyi (PPRD)
Aubin Minaku
Leon Kengo wa Dondo
Olivier Kamitatu (ARC)*

I am writing to confirm that we have now completed your FOI request and I can confirm that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office does hold information falling within the terms of your request.

We do not intend to release some of this information as we judge it is exempt from release under the following exemptions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA):

Section 27 (1) (a) International Relations

Some of the information you have requested is being withheld under section 27 (1) (a) of the FOIA. Section 27 (1) (a) provides that information is exempt if its disclosure would or would be likely to prejudice the relations between the United Kingdom and any other state.

In applying Section 27, we have had to balance the public interest in withholding the information against the public interest in disclosing it. Factors in favour of disclosure include the strong public interest in transparency and accountability.

Factors against disclosure include the strong public interest in ensuring that the FCO is able to conduct the UK's international relations effectively and protect British interests abroad.

Section 27 (1) (a) recognises that the effective conduct of international relations depends upon maintaining trust and confidence between governments. If the United Kingdom does not maintain this trust and confidence, its ability to protect and promote British interests through international relations will be hampered, which will not be in the public interest. The disclosure of information detailing our relationship with the Government of the DRC could potentially damage the bilateral relationship between the UK and the DRC. This would reduce the British Government's ability to protect and promote British interests through its relations with the DRC, which would not be in the public interest.

For these reasons, we consider that the public interest in maintaining this exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing some of the information you requested.

However, we are able to confirm that meetings took place with some of the individuals you have listed. Please see below:

- Augustine Matata Ponyo meeting took place on 25 March 2015
- Augustine Matata Ponyo meeting took place on 16 June 2015
- Augustine Matata Ponyo meeting took place on 17 August 2015
- Augustine Matata Ponyo meeting took place on 23 September 2015
- Augustine Matata Ponyo meeting took place on 05 October 2015
- Evariste Boshab (MLC) meeting took place on 9 March 2015
- Evariste Boshab (MLC) meeting took place on 12 June 2015
- Evariste Boshab (MLC) meeting took place on 19 August 2015
- Aubin Minaku meeting took place on 9 June 2015
- Leon Kengo wa Dondo meeting took place on 16 June 2015

Please contact me if you have any queries about this letter

Yours sincerely,

Central Africa Team



We keep and use information in line with the Data Protection Act 1998. We may release this personal information to other UK government departments and public authorities.