



New York

Topics

Tools

Secretariat

Locations

iSeek en français



- ▶ [In Memoriam](#)
- ▶ [iSeek covers the earthquake in Haiti](#)

[Tributes](#) > [Lisa Mbele-Mbong](#)

Lisa Mbele-Mbong, 1971 - 2010

Posted: Thursday, 21 January 2010, New York | Author: iSeek

Ms. Lisa Mbele-Mbong, a national of the United States originally from Cameroon, joined the United Nations in 2002 to take up the position of Human Rights Officer in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Her passion for human rights brought her to Haiti in 2005. For the past three and a half years, she worked as a Team Leader in the Policy and Planning Unit of the **UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti** (MINUSTAH).



Like many other UN staff members in Haiti, Lisa Mbele-Mbong was attending a meeting when tremors from the earthquake began. She ventured outside to investigate and lost her life in an instant as the building collapsed. She was 38.

Lisa was a typical "UN child". Her father worked for the **World Meteorological Organization** and her mother worked at the **World Health Organization**. She grew up in Cameroon, lived in Burundi and later moved to Europe for high school. She then went on to study in the United States at Smith College in Massachusetts.

After graduation, Lisa began her career in Washington D.C. and worked at the National Democratic Institute (NDI). It is through NDI that she made her first trip to Haiti, organizing elections. Because her parents lived in Geneva, Lisa often visited the **Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights** (OHCHR) and spoke to her colleagues about the situation in Haiti.

Colleagues and friends speak fondly of her "sharp intellect and curious mind", her strength of spirit and her conviction in her beliefs.

A colleague who worked with Lisa at the **UN Organization Mission in the DRC** (MONUC) remembers when Lisa and she volunteered to go to Eastern Congo, living in difficult conditions for two months. She believes that Lisa had much to do with the positive outcome of their mission. Her former colleague says, "Lisa was a very dedicated person, always ready to go the extra mile."

Another colleague says, "Lisa was a passionate, brave and thoughtful woman dedicated to human rights and social justice. She had a skeptical, inquiring mind and a joyous laugh; she never hesitated to challenge conventional wisdom about Haiti, human rights or any of the other many issues that engaged her. She was also beautiful and fun."

The world has lost a dedicated human rights activist and devoted mother and friend.

Lisa will be buried in Geneva.

She is survived by her 10 year old son, Nady, her parents Samuel and Helena Mbele-

Mbong, and her sister, Leontyne.

If you knew Lisa and would like to share some comments about her, please see:

[How to contribute to iSeek's memorial to UN staff who perished in Haiti](#)

*The above tribute was drafted from comments shared in the **iSeek Haiti earthquake eRoom**, through conversations with colleagues, from media accounts and from messages sent to **tributes@un.org**. Additional comments are welcomed.*

Related material

[iSeek resource page on the earthquake in Haiti](#)

[iSeek covers the earthquake in Haiti: story archives](#)



Feedback

[iSeek Team | past stories](#)