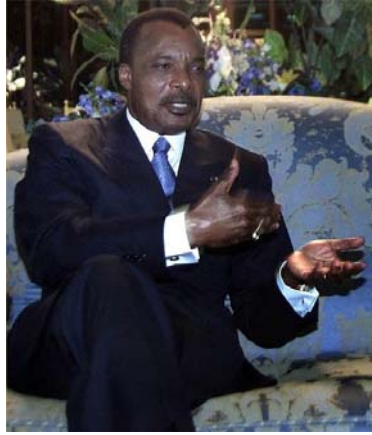


Denis Sassou Nguesso



Passion or Profession: president

Period: 1943–

Denis Sassou Nguesso first came to power in 1979, when the Congolese Labor Party (PCT) ousted Joachim Yhombi Opango and designated Sassou as president. Sassou headed a highly repressive regime until 1991, when a multiparty system was introduced. Civil war in 1997 brought Sassou to power again. In 2002 elections, he ran unopposed (his opponents were barred from running) and was elected to a seven-year presidential term.