

PUBLIC

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Further Information on UA 96/06 (AFR 22/001/2006, 21 April 2006) - Possible prisoners of conscience / Fear of torture

REPUBLIC OF CONGO

Brice Mackosso (m), human rights defender
Christian Mounzéo (m), human rights defender

Human rights defenders Brice Mackosso and Christian Mounzéo were released on bail (*libération provisoire*) on 28 April and returned to their homes. They had been in prison since 7 April.

They have been charged with “breach of trust, complicity in breach of trust and forgery (*abus de confiance, complicité, faux et usage de faux*). The date for their appearance in court has not been disclosed.

While they were in custody, a number of Congolese and international human rights organizations appealed for their unconditional release. In a 24 April press statement, World Bank President Paul Wolfowitz stated that “... their arrest calls into question Congo’s commitments to assure there is public accountability”.

Although they have been released, Brice Mackosso and Christian Mounzéo still face the prospect of being tried on what appear to be trumped-up charges and the possibility of being imprisoned on account of their human rights activities and their criticism of the government’s lack of transparency in the management of revenues from the country’s natural resources.

No further action is requested from the UA network. Many thanks to all who sent appeals. Amnesty International will continue to monitor the case closely, and take further campaigning action as necessary.