

PUBLIC

AI Index: AFR 62/006/2009
16 March 2009

UA 78/09 Incommunicado detention/ Fear of torture and other ill-treatment.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO Dolly Inefo Mbunga (m), all human rights defenders
Floribert Chebeya Bahizire (m),
Donat Tshikaya (m)

Human rights defenders Floribert Chebeya Bahizire, Dolly Inefo Mbunga and Donat Tshikaya were arrested on 15 March in Kinshasa, the DRC's capital, by officers of the *Police Nationale Congolaise*, national police force. According to eyewitnesses, the men were beaten, handcuffed and "thrown" into police vehicles and then taken to the Kin-Mazière detention centre in central Kinshasa, the headquarters of the Special Services police.

They have been held incommunicado since then, putting them at risk of torture and other ill-treatment. Amnesty International considers them prisoners of conscience, detained solely for their human rights activities and peaceful exercise of their rights to freedom of expression and assembly.

The men were arrested at the offices of a national human rights network, RENADHOC (*Réseau National des ONGs des Droits de l'Homme en RD Congo*), just after they had held a press conference calling for a peaceful protest march and sit-in in front of the National Assembly, to protest against what they regard as unconstitutional attempts by the ruling AMP political coalition of President Joseph Kabila to force the removal from office of the President of the National Assembly, Vital Kamerhe, and other members of the National Assembly's Secretariat.

Floribert Chibeya Bahizire is the President of the human rights NGO *La Voix des Sans Voix (VSV)*, Voice of the Voiceless, and Executive-Secretary RENADHOC. Dolly Inefo Mbunga is the Deputy-Director of VSV and Donat Tshikaya is a RENADHOC staff member.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Special Services police (Direction des Renseignements Généraux et Services Spéciaux de la police (DRGS), is a special intelligence division of the national police force. The DRGS has been responsible for numerous arbitrary arrests of suspected opposition members and supporters, journalists and human rights activists, as well as acts of torture and other ill-treatment.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in French, English or your own language:

- urging the authorities to release Floribert Chebeya Bahizire, Dolly Inefo Mbunga and Donat Tshikaya immediately and without condition, as they are prisoners of conscience, detained solely for exercising their right to freedom of expression and freedom of assembly,
- call on the authorities to allow Floribert Chebeya Bahizire, Dolly Inefo Mbunga and Donat Tshikaya immediate access to legal representation as well as family visits and any medical attention they may require,
- demand that the authorities stop the harassment and unlawful arrests of human rights activists in DRC.

APPEALS TO:
Head of State

Son Excellence Joseph KABILA
Président de la République
Présidence de la République
Palais de la Nation
Avenue de Lemera
Kinshasa-Gombe
République Démocratique du Congo
E-mail: **presipp@yahoo.fr**
Salutation: **Dear President Kabila/Son Excellence Monsieur le Président**

Prime Minister
Adolphe Muzito
Premier Ministre de la République
Primature
Palais de la Nation
Avenue de Lemera
Kinshasa-Gombe
République Démocratique du Congo
E-mail: **primaturerdc@yahoo.fr**
Salutation : **Dear Prime Minister/ Monsieur le Premier Ministre**

President of the National Assembly
Vital Kamerhe
Assemblée Nationale
Palais du Peuple
Kinshasa, Lingwala
République Démocratique du Congo
E-mail: **assnat@parlement-rdc.org**
Salutation: **Dear President of the National Assembly/Monsieur le Président de l'Assemblée Nationale**

President of the Senate
Léon KENGO WA DONDO
Senat
Palais du Peuple
Kinshasa, Lingwala
République Démocratique du Congo
Email: **senat@parlement-rdc.org**
Salutation: **Dear President of the Senate/Monsieur le Président du Senat**

COPIES TO:

and to diplomatic representatives of Democratic Republic of Congo accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 27 April.