

URGENT ACTION

DETAINED YOUTH MUST BE RELEASED

Three youths, two of whom are youth activists from Lutte pour le Changement (LUCHA), who had been held in incommunicado detention after their arrest, are now detained at Makala Prison in Kinshasa. They are accused of “spreading rumours”, “incitement to disobedience” and “undermining national security”.

Two LUCHA activists, **Bienvenu Matumo** and **Marcel Héritier Kambale Kapitene** went missing in the early morning of 16 February in Kinshasa. They were hiding in a hotel, after they realised they had been followed. In the last communication with their contacts, they indicated that they were being arrested. This arrest came hours before the general strike called for by members of the political opposition and civil society in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) to protest against delays in the preparations for the 2016 general elections in DRC. LUCHA supported the general strike.

On the eve of Bienvenu and Marcel's arrest, authorities arrested **Victor Tesongo**, who was helping the two with preparing leaflets for the general strike.

The three were held incommunicado before being transferred to the Prosecutor's Office in Gombe neighbourhood in Kinshasa on 19 February by security forces. They were brought before a magistrate for interrogation on 20 February. They have been accused of “spreading rumours”, “incitement to disobedience” and “undermining national security”.

They were transferred to Makala Prison in Kinshasa on 23 February.

Amnesty International is concerned that the three were held incommunicado for several days. They are at risk of being subjected to torture and other ill-treatment.

Please write immediately in French or your own language:

- Calling upon Congolese authorities to immediately and unconditionally release Bienvenu Matumo, Marcel Héritier Kambale Kapitene and Victor Tesongo;
- Urging them to ensure that, pending the immediate and unconditional release of the three, they are protected from torture or other ill-treatment;
- Urging them to uphold the rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 6 APRIL 2016 TO:

Minister of Justice

Monsieur Alexis Tambwe Mwamba
Ministry of Justice
228 Avenue de Lemera
BP 3137
Kinshasa-Gombe
DRC
Email: minjustdh@gmail.com
Salutation: **Honourable Minister**

Minister of Interior and Security

Professor Evariste Boshab
Ministry of Interior and Security
Avenue Roi Baudoin
Kinshasa-Gombe
DRC
Email: ngomamundulu@gmail.com
Salutation: **Honourable Minister**

And copies to:

Prime Minister
His Excellency Augustin Matat Ponyo
Office of the Prime Minister
5 Avenue Roi Baudoin
Kinshasa-Gombe
DRC
Email: cabinet@primature.cd

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below:

Name Address 1 Address 2 Address 3 Fax Fax number Email Email address Salutation Salutation

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the first update of UA 36/16. Further information: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr62/3455/2016/en/>

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

DRC's President Joseph Kabila has been in office since 2001 when he took over after the assassination of his father. He was elected as president in the 2006 and 2011 elections. The Congolese constitution limits a president to two consecutive terms in office. As the November 2016 elections draw closer, calls for President Kabila to step down have intensified, as has the government crackdown on those expressing these views.

Opposition leaders and civil society organizations called for a general strike (known as *ville morte*, or dead city) on 16 February. They asked the population to stay at home in protest against delays in preparations for the upcoming general elections in DRC. LUCHA supported the general strike.

LUCHA is a youth movement, created in Goma, the provincial capital of North Kivu, in DRC, in 2012. The movement is known for its peaceful actions. They organize sit-ins, demonstrations and other actions to claim their rights and those of the people of DRC. They have continuously called for the organization of elections within the constitutional deadlines and for the respect of the presidential term limits outlined in the DRC's constitution.

The authorities have accused LUCHA of being a criminal movement, set up with the aim of disturbing public order. At least 19 of their members and sympathisers are currently detained.

Name: Bienvenu Matumo, Marcel Héritier Kambale Kapitene and Victor Tesongo

Gender m/f: m

Further information on UA: 36/16 Index: AFR 62/3493/2016 Issue Date: 24 February 2016