

PUBLIC

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Medical Concern

16 March 1998

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO Albert Bosangi, journalist

Amnesty International is concerned about the serious state of health of Albert Bosangi, currently detained at the *Centre pénitentiaire et de rééducation*, Penitentiary and Reeducation centre (former Makala Prison) in Kinshasa. Albert Bosangi has diabetes and rheumatism. Amnesty International has received reports that his health is deteriorating in custody due to the lack of the special diet he requires, and appropriate medical care.

Albert Bosangi was arrested in early February 1998. He is the editor-in-chief of an independent newspaper known as *Alarme*. He was apparently arrested because of an article, written by another journalist, published in *Alarme*. The article criticised the arrest of Joseph Olengha N'Koy, president of a political movement, known as the *Forces novatrices pour l'union et la solidarité*, Innovative Forces for Union and Solidarity (FONUS), on 20 January 1998. Albert Bosangi has been charged with *atteinte à la sûreté de l'Etat*, endangering state security. Amnesty International has received reports that Albert Bosangi was tortured with truncheons soon after his arrest.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Hundreds of people are reported to have been arrested in various parts of the DRC since the government took power on 17 May 1997. The vast majority of these arrests are reported to be arbitrary, carried out without arrest warrants, by soldiers who do not have the legal power to make arrests under Congolese law. Detainees are often held incommunicado, sometimes in unofficial detention centres, such as private residences. Reports of ill-treatment and torture are common.

Those arrested include members of political opposition groups critical of the AFDL, journalists, human rights activists, as well as members of the former government. The AFDL has officially banned political party activity outside of the AFDL and suspended the Zairian constitution, which guaranteed freedom of association and the right to hold peaceful demonstrations.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/faxes/express/airmail letters in French or your own language:

- urging that Albert Bosangi be allowed access to medical care and that he gets the diet he requires for diabetes;
- urging that Albert Bosangi be transferred to a hospital if an independent medical doctor recommends it;
- explaining that Amnesty International considers Albert Bosangi a prisoner of conscience held solely because of his activities as a journalist;
- calling for his immediate and unconditional release;
- calling for immediate steps to end the current trend of arbitrary arrests in the DRC.

APPEALS TO:

President

Son Excellence Laurent-Désiré KABILA
Président de la République
Présidence de la République
Kinshasa-Ngaliema
Democratic Republic of Congo

Telegrams: President Kabila, Kinshasa DR Congo
Salutation: Monsieur le Président de la République
Fax: + 243 88 02120

Minister of Justice

M. Mwenze KONGOLO

Ministre de la Justice

Ministère de la Justice

BP 3137, Kinshasa-Gombe

Democratic Republic of Congo

Telegrams: Ministre Justice, Kinshasa, DR Congo

Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre

Minister of State for Internal Affairs

Gatean KAKUDJI

Ministre de l'Etat à l'Intérieur

Hôtel du Conseil exécutif

Kinshasa-Gombe

Democratic Republic of Congo

Telegrams: Ministre Interieur, Kinshasa, DR Congo

Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre

COPIES TO:

Le Phare (independent newspaper), Faxes: +1 212 3769270 (this is a number in the United States but the fax will be transmitted to *Le Phare*)

and to diplomatic representatives of the 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 1998.