

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO (DRC) N'sii Luanda Shandwe, human rights activist

Human rights activist N'sii Luanda Shandwe has been arrested in the capital, Kinshasa. Neither friends nor family have been allowed to see him, and Amnesty International believes he is at serious risk of torture and ill-treatment. It would appear that he was arrested solely because of the authorities' intolerance of human rights activists.

N'sii Luanda is the president of the *Comité des observateurs des droits de l'homme* (CODHO), Committee of Human Rights Observers. He was arrested at his home on 2 June, by agents from the security service known as the *Détection militaire des activités anti-patrie* (DEMIAP), Military Detection of Unpatriotic Activities. He was interrogated for several hours and then provisionally released. However, he was ordered to report to DEMIAP again on 4 June, whereupon he was rearrested.

The following day he was transferred to a detention centre run by another security service, the *Agence nationale de renseignements* (ANR), National Intelligence Agency, where he is still held.

It appears that his arrest is linked to telephone calls that he is alleged to have made to contacts both locally and abroad, and which the security services had reportedly been monitoring. His mobile telephone was confiscated after he was interrogated by DEMIAP on 2 June. It appears the authorities may consider the telephone calls to have been of a political and subversive nature.

CODHO, founded in 1997, is one of the DRC's most active human rights organisations. It has worked on behalf of many political prisoners and prisoners of conscience, and continues to play an invaluable role in promoting respect for human rights in the DRC.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The ANR, DEMIAP and several other security services operate in effect outside the framework of Congolese law and of international human rights treaties to which the country is party. **They** are ultimately answerable to the President or to government ministers, without oversight by the judiciary. The government has allowed the security services virtually unlimited powers to arbitrarily detain anyone considered to be a threat to the government, including human rights activists, politicians, journalists and lawyers.

President Joseph Kabila has yet to honour in full his recent public commitment to close all unofficial detention centres run by the security services, including DEMIAP and the ANR. Torture and ill-treatment are commonplace at these detention centres.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send e-mails/faxes/express/airmail letters in French, English or your own language:

- expressing concern at the apparently arbitrary arrest and continuing incommunicado detention of N'sii Luanda;
- urging the authorities to allow his lawyers, family and doctors to see him immediately, and to allow him any medical treatment he may require without delay;
- asking what charges, if any, he faces;

- urging them to release him immediately and unconditionally if he is not to be charged with a recognisably criminal offence and promptly given the opportunity to answer any charge before a court of law;
- urging the authorities to implement President Joseph Kabila's public commitment to close all unofficial detention centres, promptly and fully, and to stop targeting human rights activists solely because of their legitimate human rights work.

APPEALS TO:

(Please note that all the fax numbers given may be difficult to get through to - please be patient and keep trying)

1. President

Président Joseph Kabila
Président de la République, Présidence de la République
Kinshasa-Ngaliema, Democratic Republic of Congo

e-mails: UPP@ic.cd

Fax: + 243 88 02120

Salutation: Monsieur le Président de la République / Dear President

2. Minister of Justice

M. Antoine Deogratias Ngele Masudi
Ministre de la Justice et des Affaires parlementaires
Ministère de la Justice
BP 3137

Kinshasa-Gombe

République Démocratique du Congo

Fax:+ 243 12 20 843

Salutation:Monsieur le Ministre / Dear Minister

3. Head of the ANR

Didier Kazadi Nyembwe
Directeur de L'Agence Nationale de Renseignements (ANR)
Ministère de l'Intérieur
Hôtel du Conseil Exécutif
République Démocratique du Congo

Fax:+ 243 12 20 843 (c/o Ministry of Justice)

Salutation:Monsieur le Directeur / Dear Director

COPIES TO:

Minister for Human Rights

Professeur Ntumba Luaba
Ministre des Droits humains
Ministère des Droits humains
33/C Boulevard du 30 juin
Kinshasa-Gombe

République Démocratique du Congo

Fax:+ 243 12 20 664

Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre / Dear Minister

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 18 July 2001.