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UA 277/02 Prisoner of conscience/
fear of unlawful killing/
fear of "disappearance"/

5 September 2002

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**DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC Honoré Musoko (m) - lawyer and
OF CONGO/UGANDA human rights defender**

Amnesty International is deeply concerned for the safety of Honoré Musoko, a lawyer and a leading member of the *Justice Plus* human rights organization in Bunia, the capital of the Kibali-Ituri province of northeastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). He is reportedly being held incommunicado, and Amnesty International believes that he is at acute risk of torture or ill-treatment, "disappearance" or killing.

Honoré Musoko was arrested on 3 September in the town of Aru, some 260 kilometres north of Bunia, by soldiers of the *Rassemblement congolais pour la démocratie - Mouvement de libération* (RCD-ML), Congolese Rally for Democracy - Liberation Movement, a Ugandan-directed armed political group. Honoré Musoko had been returning from a trip to Uganda, and had been about to board a connecting flight from Aru to Bunia at the time of his arrest. He was subsequently transferred to the RCD-ML "Mont Hawa" military camp in Aru territory, where he is still believed to be held.

Honoré Musoko was reportedly arrested on the orders of the Aru RCD-ML military commander and the RCD-ML Administrator of Aru territory. He was accused of making hostile statements about the RCD-ML and of collaborating with opponents of the RCD-ML. The true motive for his arrest, however, appears to relate to a interview he gave on "Voice of America" radio regarding the dire human rights and political situation in the Ituri region. Amnesty International considers him a prisoner of conscience.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Kibali-Ituri province was created by and is under the control of Uganda and its military, the Ugandan People's Defence Force (UPDF), headquartered in Bunia. With Ugandan backing, the RCD-ML claims to be the *de facto* political authority in the region. However, a combination of RCD-ML factionalism, divided loyalties among UPDF units, and an ambiguous and shifting Ugandan government attitude towards the RCD-ML, has left the province in a political and security crisis. The resulting chaos has allowed numerous militia groups to flourish and has exacerbated ethnic violence between Hema, Lendu and other ethnic groups in the region, which since 1999 has claimed the lives of at least 50,000 civilians and left hundreds of thousands displaced.

Torture and ill-treatment in detention, unlawful killings and other serious human rights abuses are widespread. Human rights defenders, humanitarian workers and others who are perceived to be in communication with the international community are regularly threatened and have been victims of such abuses.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Honoré Musoko;
- calling on the Ugandan authorities to intervene with the RCD-ML to secure his immediate and unconditional release;

- calling on the Ugandan and RCD-ML authorities to ensure that Honoré Musoko is protected from torture, ill-treatment and other human rights abuses;
- calling on the authorities to ensure that, for as long as he remains in detention, Honoré Musoko is given immediate and unrestricted access to humanitarian and human rights organizations, legal representatives and any medical attention he may need;
- urging Ugandan and RCD-ML security and political leaders to take measures to prevent any further abuses, including unlawful killings, arbitrary arrests and unlawful detentions.

APPEALS TO:

Amnesty International does not have fax numbers or e-mail address for the RCD-ML. Please direct appeals to the following Ugandan authorities:

President Yoweri K MUSEVENI
Office of the President
Parliament Buildings
PO Box 7168, Kampala, Uganda
Fax: + 256 41 344 144
e-mail: info@govexecutive.net
Salutation: Dear President

Mr Amama MBABAZI
Minister of Defence
Ministry of Defence
PO Box 3789, Kampala, Uganda
Fax: + 256 41 245 911
Salutation: Dear Minister

UPDF Chief of Staff
Brigadier James KAZINI
Armed Forces Headquarters
PO Box 3798, Kampala, Uganda
Fax: + 256 41 245 911
Salutation: Dear Brigadier

COPIES TO:

Mr James Wambogo WAPAKHBULO
Minister for Foreign Affairs
PO Box 7084, Kampala, Uganda
Fax: + 256 41 258 722

and to diplomatic representatives of Uganda accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 17 October 2002.