

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO (DRC)

Urbain Nkwasandi

Rodolphe Matuka

Fidèle Mizele

Mafuta Kizola

Rufin Konda

Henri Mindele

Patrice Kulenguluka- all members the Parti Lumumbiste unifié (PALU), an
opposition political party

The seven men named above, all activists of an opposition political party, were arrested by members of the *Police nationale* (National Police) as they held a political meeting in the Ngiri Ngiri district of the capital, Kinshasa, on 26 September 1999. It is not known where they are now detained and there are fears that they may be subjected to torture or other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment.

Amnesty International has documented dozens of cases of whippings, beatings, sexual humiliation and other forms of torture of people in police custody in the DRC during this year. Members of opposition political parties appear to be especially targeted for torture and other forms of ill-treatment.

At least 76 other PALU members arrested in July 1999 remain in detention. None of them have been charged or tried and many of them claim to have been beaten or whipped while in police custody.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Opposition political activity has been heavily repressed since President Kabila came to power in May 1997. With the exception of the state-run *Comités de pouvoirs populaires* (CPP) Committees for Popular Power, opposition activity is prohibited. Under a presidential decree issued in January this year, political parties can register, but only if they are approved by the government and pay a fee equal to around US\$10,000. Most opposition political parties have rejected the conditions imposed on them and none are known to have applied for registration. Hundreds of non-violent political activists have been arrested, detained and sometimes tried in unfair courts. Amnesty International considers many of them to be prisoners of conscience.

The continuing arrests and detentions of non-violent political opponents is also a violation of a July 1999 cease-fire agreement signed by the DRC Government in Lusaka, Zambia. The agreement requires signatories to allow free political activity, which should culminate in a national political forum and the holding of multiparty elections.

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

- seeking assurances that the seven men named above have not been tortured or otherwise ill-treated;
- calling on the authorities to reveal where they are being detained and to allow them immediate access to their families, lawyers and any medical attention they may need;

- asking for them to be promptly charged with a recognizable criminal offence or else immediately released.

APPEALS TO:

President

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

Telegrams:Président, Kinshasa, DR Congo

email:UPP@ic.cd

Salutation:Monsieur le Président de la République / Dear President Kabila

Minister of Justice

Mwenze Kongolo
Minister of Justice
Ministre de la justice
Ministere de la justice
BP 3137 Kinshasa-Gombe, Democratic Republic of Congo

Telegrams: Ministre Justice, DR Congo

Salutation:Monsieur le Ministre/Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

Minister for Human Rights

Leonard She Okitundu
Minister of Human Rights
Ministre des droits humains
Ministère des droits humains
Kinshasa-Gombe
République Démocratique du Congo

e-mail: mininfordc@ic.cd

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 2 November 1999.