



To: Health Professional Network
From: Health and Human Rights Team
Date: 31 August 2007

Health Professional Action

Enforced disappearance of medical doctor

Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)

Summary:

This month marks a year since Dr Faustin Sosso was abducted in central Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), by armed men believed to be members of the Garde Républicaine, President Joseph Kabila's presidential guard. Faustin Sosso is a medical doctor who also worked as medical adviser to Jean-Pierre Bemba, the main rival to President Kabila in the DRC's 2006 presidential elections. A year after his abduction, his family still has no news about his fate.

Background information:

Dr. Faustin Sosso, a married father of two, was abducted on 20 August 2006. He was bundled into a jeep and reports suggest he was taken to Camp Tshatshi, the main base of the Garde Républicaine, and subsequently transferred to the custody of military intelligence, known as ex-DEMIAP. AI believes his enforced disappearance relates solely to his professional connection with Jean-Pierre Bemba.

Some reports suggest that Faustin Sosso has been extrajudicially executed or that he died as a result of torture while in custody, and that his body has been secretly disposed of. His family, however, continue to believe that he is alive and held in secret detention, based on unconfirmed "sightings" reported to them by telephone. After his enforced disappearance, family members received phone calls from people identifying themselves as security force officers demanding money for Faustin Sosso's release.

Politically motivated arrests and abuses by the security forces were especially common during the presidential elections in late 2006 and subsequent fighting in Kinshasa in March 2007 between government forces and militia loyal to Jean-Pierre Bemba. Peaceful opposition members and supporters, journalists and others were arbitrarily detained, ill-treated, tortured and in some cases, killed or disappeared. Many of those arrested are still in detention

awaiting trial on what AI believes are unfounded charges of "espionage" or "participation in an insurrectionary movement".

Recommended actions:

Please send appeals in French, English or your language to the President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo:

- Introducing yourself as a health professional concerned about the whereabouts and well-being of Dr. Sosso.
- Calling upon the DRC authorities to conduct a prompt, thorough and independent investigation into the enforced disappearance of Dr. Faustin Sosso, and to make these results public.
- Calling upon the DRC authorities to make those responsible for Dr. Sosso's abduction and subsequent human rights violations to be brought to justice.

Appeals:

Salutation: Dear President

President Joseph Kabila
Présidence de la République
Kinshasa Gombe
Democratic Republic of the Congo
Email: pr@presidentrdc.cd or pp@presidentrdc.cd