

URGENT ACTION

TEACHERS FREED, STRIKE LEADERS STILL HARASSED

Two teachers in Brazzaville, Republic of Congo, detained for a week in connection with an ongoing strike, have now been released without charge. However leaders of the union still face harassment and intimidation by the Congolese authorities.

Hilaire Eyima and **Claude Nzingoula** were released on 25 April 2013 without charge, but only after they were forced to read a statement to the national media calling on other teachers to end the strike and asking forgiveness for their part in it. However, teachers continued to strike and **leaders of the Coalition for Improving the Teaching Profession** (Concertation pour la revalorisation de la profession d'enseignant) **CPRE**, a coalition of teachers' trade unions, are still being harassed and intimidated by the authorities.

The chairman of the CPRE, who is still in hiding, was called on 24 April 2013 on his mobile phone by an agent of the General Directorate for the Surveillance of the territory (Direction générale de Surveillance du Territoire, DGST) who threatened him and urged him to call off the strike. The agent told him that unless he leaves the country, security agents will find him and other members of CPRE currently in hiding.

Please write immediately in French, English or your own language:

- Expressing concern at reports that leaders of teachers' unions taking part in the on-going strike are being forced against their will to make statements to call off the strike and denouncing their participation;
- Expressing concern for the safety of leaders of the CPRE currently in hiding and seeking assurances that leaders of CPRE will not be arrested or threatened for exercising their right to freedom of expression and association;
- Calling on the Congolese authorities to ensure that the harassment and intimidation of leaders of the CPRE by agents of the DGST will be stopped;
- Appealing to the authorities to respect the rights of the teachers and to engage in a constructive dialogue with CPRE as a means to peacefully resolve the teachers' grievances and ultimately end the strike.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 10 JUNE 2013 TO:

President of the Republic
SE M. Denis Sassou-Nguesso
Palais du Peuple
Brazzaville, Republic of Congo
Fax: + 242 222 81 4557 (keep trying)
Salutation: His Excellency/Son Excellence

Minister of State for Justice and Human Rights; Keeper of the Seals
M. Aimé Emmanuel Yoka
Ministry of Justice and Human Rights
BP 2497
Brazzaville, Republic of Congo
Fax: +242 222 81 4167 (keep trying)
Salutation: Dear Minister/Monsieur le Ministre

And copies to:
Minister of the Interior and Decentralization
M. Raymond Zephyrin Mboulou
Ministry of the Interior and Decentralization
BP 800
Brazzaville, Republic of Congo
Fax: +242 222 81 3317 (Keep trying)

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the first update of UA 104/13. Further information: <http://amnesty.org/en/library/info/AFR22/001/2013/en>

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Congolese teachers have been on an indefinite strike since 25 February 2013 demanding an improvement in the teaching profession, including higher wages and effective and fair recruitment within the public education system. The strike was called by CPRE after negotiation with the government failed.

Name: Leaders of the CPRE (m), Hilaire Eyima (m) and Claude Nzingoula (m),
Gender m/f: m

Further information on UA: 104/13 Index: AFR 22/002/2013 Issue Date: 29 April 2013