

URGENT ACTION

HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISTS HELD INCOMMUNICADO

Several Congolese human rights activists are still being held incommunicado, eight days after a press conference held at Eloko Makasi youth centre in Masina, Kinshasa, was broken up by security officials.

Security officials stormed a press conference held on 15 March at Eloko Makasi youth centre in Masina, Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Approximately 30 people were arrested at the time, including activists from Congolese youth organization Lutte pour le Changement (LUCHA), the Senegalese movement Y'en a Marre, the Burkinabé group Balai Citoyen, as well as an American diplomat and journalists present at the press conference. The press conference followed a workshop on youth civic engagement in political processes in the run up to the country's elections, and was organized by local NGOs la Jeunesse pour une Nouvelle Société (JNS), le Forum National de la Jeunesse pour l'Excellence (FNJE) and Lutte pour le Changement (LUCHA).

Amnesty International has received information that some of those arrested were ill-treated during the operation by security officials. An eyewitness told Amnesty International that people were harassed and man-handled by security officials before being taken to unknown places. The American diplomat and foreign journalists were released the same day, and the Senegalese and Burkinabé activists were subsequently deported. Other Congolese human rights activists are still detained incommunicado at unknown locations. Those detained are at risk of torture or other ill-treatment.

Amnesty International is concerned about these attacks on the rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly.

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

- Urging the Congolese authorities to immediately reveal where the human rights activists and others arrested are being held;
- Calling on the Congolese authorities to either charge them with a recognizable criminal offence or immediately and unconditionally release them;
- Urging the Congolese authorities to ensure that they are not subjected to any torture or other ill-treatment and to guarantee them access to lawyers and visits from their family members while in detention.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 4 MAY 2015:

Minister of Justice and Human Rights

Alexis Tambwe Mwamba
Ministry of Justice and Human Rights
P.O Box 3137
Kinshasa/Gombe, DRC
Fax: +243 8805521

Salutation: Dear Minister

Attorney General

Flory Kabange Numbi
P.O.Box 7016
Kinshasa1
Kinshasa, DRC
Email: pgr_rdc@yahoo.fr

Salutation: Dear Attorney General

And copies to:

Prime Minister

His Excellency Augustin Matata Ponyo
Office of the Prime Minister
5 Avenue Roi Baudoin
Kinshasa/Gombe, DRC
Email: contact@primature.cd
cabinet@primature.cd

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below:

Name Address 1 Address 2 Address 3 Fax Fax number Email Email address Salutation Salutation

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The workshop and press conference were organized by local NGOs, JNS, FNJE and LUCHA and brought together activists from Y'en a Marre, a civil society group from Senegal, and Burkina Faso's Balai Citoyen, a civil society group which contributed to the ousting of President Blaise Compaoré in Burkina Faso in October 2014. Some Y'en a Marre members are well known in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). They played an important role in the popular mobilization of Senegalese citizens against Senegal's former President's bid to run for a third term in 2012.

The US Embassy in Kinshasa has recognized in a short statement that it financed part of this event.

An American diplomat and foreign journalists who were arrested along with these youth activists were released the same day. On 18 March, the Congolese government spokesperson held a press conference stating that foreign activists would be deported. The same day in the evening, a Congolese journalist was released from jail.

Name: Undisclosed

Gender m/f: m

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