

URGENT ACTION

RELEASE DETAINED HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISTS

Two human rights activists, Yves Makwambala and Fred Bauma remain in detention at Makala prison in Kinshasa. The two are facing charges of “treason, attempted coup and an attempt to take the life of a Head of State”.

Yves Makwambala and **Fred Bauma** were among at least 30 people arrested on 15 March after Congolese security officials stormed a press conference held by the youth movement Filimbi at Eloko Makasi youth center in Masina, Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Others arrested at the time included activists from Congolese youth organisation 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 American diplomat and foreign journalists were released the same day, and the Senegalese and Burkinabé activists were subsequently deported. On 21 April, Sylvain Saluseke, one of the leaders of Filimbi movement was released from secret detention without charge.

Yves Makwambala and Fred Bauma were held in secret detention until they were transferred to Makala prison in Kinshasa on 25 April and 5 May respectively. Both activists are being charged with “treason, attempted coup and an attempt to take the life of a Head of State.” However, according to their lawyers, the activists’ files with the prosecutor do not contain any element of culpability against the two.

Amnesty International believes that the activists are being detained solely for peacefully exercising their rights to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association. Amnesty International considers them to be prisoners of conscience. Amnesty International is concerned about attacks on the rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly in the context of the upcoming elections in DRC, aimed especially at youth and political opposition groups.

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

- Calling on the Congolese authorities to drop all charges against the two activists and to immediately and unconditionally release them;
- Calling on them to ensure that the activists are not tortured or otherwise ill-treated, and have regular access to their families;
- Urging them to uphold the rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly in DRC.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 3 JULY TO:

Minister of Justice and Human Rights

Alexis Tambwe Mwamba
Ministry of Justice and Human Rights
P.O. Box 3137
Kinshasa/Gombe
DRC
Email: info@minjustice.cd
Fax: +243 8805521

Salutation: Dear Minister

Attorney General

Flory Kabange Numbi
Office of the Attorney General
P.O. Box 7016 Kinshasa 1
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,
primaturerdc@yahoo.fr,
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. This is the first update of UA 67/15. Further information: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/AFR62/1284/2015/en/>

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The 15 March press conference 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). It brought together several people including 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) as 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 press conference followed a workshop on youth civic engagement in political processes in the run to the country's elections.

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

Name: Yves Makwambala and Fred Bauma

Gender m/f: m

Further Information: 67/15 Index: AFR 62/1702/2015 Issue Date: 22 May 2015