

URGENT ACTION

SIX LUCHA ACTIVISTS 'FORCED' OUT OF PRISON

Six activists from the youth movement, *Lutte pour le Changement* (LUCHA) were on 26 July forcibly released from prison after a presidential ordonnance issued on 22 July by President Joseph Kabila pardoning them.

President Joseph Kabila issued a presidential ordonnance on 22 July granting individual pardon to **Rebecca Kavugho, Serge Sivyavugha, Justin Kambale Mutsongo, Melka Kamundu, John Anipenda and Ghislain Muhiwa**

However in a public statement issued by the six activists on 23 July, they rejected the individual pardon measures in solidarity with other political prisoners and prisoners of conscience, including Fred Bauma, Yves Makwambala, Bienvenu Matumo and other youth activists awaiting their trials in Kinshasa. They also noted they had almost completed their prison terms. Their sentence was to end in less than a month on 16 August.

During a media interview on 24 July on Radio France International (RFI), the Minister of Justice stated that the government would get them out of prison by force. The six were 'forced' out of prison on 26 July.

The six LUCHA activists were arrested on the morning of 16 February while preparing materials in support of a countrywide strike called for by the opposition. They went on trial and were sentenced to six months in prison for 'attempting to incite disobedience' on 24 February.

No further action is requested of the UA network. Many thanks to those who sent appeals

This is the second update of UA 37/16. Further information: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr62/3530/2016/en/>

Name: Rebecca Kavugho, Serge Sivyavugha, Justin Kambale Mutsongo, Melka Kamundu, John Anipenda and Ghislain Muhiwa
Gender m/f: m

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