

PUBLIC

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**DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO (DRC)**

**Feu d'Or BONSANGE, music editor**

**Kala BONGAMBA, printer**

**Clovis KADDA, Director of publication - all working for the newspaper, L'Alarme.**

Amnesty International is extremely concerned that Kala Bongamba and Feu d'Or Bonsange are being subjected to torture and other forms of cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment. They were arrested in the capital, Kinshasa, in the early hours of 27 September 1999, by soldiers of the 50th military division. The detainees were reportedly first held in the residence of a senior military official, before being transferred on the evening of 2 October to an unofficial detention centre in a building known as the "GLM".

Their arrest is part of an official policy of harassment and intimidation since 1997 of the people who produce *L'Alarme* newspaper. In 1997, the editor, Bonsange Yema, was arrested in Kisangani and accused of giving information to a UN team investigating massacres there. In 1998 he was sentenced to one year's imprisonment in connection with an article published by *L'Alarme*. In February 1999, shortly after his release from prison, several members of his family were arrested and some of them were tortured to make them reveal his whereabouts [see UA 53/99].

For a number of weeks soldiers have come to the newspaper office and Bonsange Yema's home and confiscated office equipment, furniture and personal property from the family home.

The director of *L'Alarme*, Clovis Kadda, was arrested on 22 September 1999 and taken for questioning at the Kinshasa military headquarters after the authorities learned that one of the rebel commanders is his relative. He was severely tortured after being accused of complicity with the enemy. Although he was released the following day, he remains in hiding fearing rearrest and ill-treatment. He has been informed by sources close to the security forces that his rearrest is likely.

The Congolese government signed a peace agreement with the rebel forces in July 1999.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Amnesty International has documented hundreds of cases of torture and ill-treatment in the DRC since President Kabila came to power in 1997. President Kabila told an Amnesty International delegation visiting the country in August 1999 that there were only some "isolated cases" of torture in the country. However, no allegations of torture are known to have been investigated - the torturers continue in the knowledge that they will enjoy impunity.

Torture appears to be systematic in unofficial or military detention centres, where prisoners are kept incommunicado. The "GLM building" is one of Kinshasa's most notorious detention centres, where countless cases of extreme torture have been reported. During a visit to Kinshasa in August 1999, Amnesty International representatives learned that in some cases torture is so extreme that the victims may have died as a result.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express/airmail letters in French, English or your own language:**

- seeking assurances that Feu d'Or Bonsange and Kala Bongamba are not being tortured or otherwise ill-treated;
- asking for the immediate release of Feu d'Or Bonsange and Kala Bongamba if they are being held solely for their professional activities, or else to be transferred to an official place of detention and promptly charged with a recognizable criminal offence;
- urging the authorities to publicly order the security forces to lift the threats against Clovis Kadda and to order an investigation into reports that he was tortured, and for those found responsible to be brought to justice.

**APPEALS TO:**

President

Président Laurent-Désiré KABILA  
Président de la République, Présidence de la République  
Kinshasa-Ngaliema, Democratic Republic of Congo

**Telegrams:Président, Kinshasa, DR Congo**

**e-mail:UPP@ic.cd**

**Salutation:Monsieur le Président de la République / Dear President Kabila**

**COPIES TO:**

Minister for Human Rights

Leonard She Okitundu  
Minister of Human Rights  
Ministre des droits humains  
Ministère des droits humains  
Kinshasa-Gombe  
République Démocratique du Congo

**e-mail: mininfordc@ic.cd**

and to diplomatic representatives of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) accredited to your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 16 November 1999.