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DRC: Rescind expulsion of UN official and investigate extra-judicial killings and disappearances

The Government of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) should rescind the decision to expel Scott Campbell, senior UN official, and instead investigate the extra-judicial killings and enforced disappearances documented by his office, Amnesty International said today.

Scott Campbell, Head of the UN Joint Human Rights Office (UNJHRO), was declared *persona non grata* by the Congolese government on 16 October 2014 following the publication of a report documenting extra-judicial killings and enforced disappearances. Other UNJHRO officials have also reported receiving threats since the report's publication.

The UNJHRO report, released on 15 October 2014, documented allegations of nine extra-judicial killings and 32 enforced disappearances during a police operation, Operation Likofi ("bash"), targeting street criminality between November 2013 and February 2014. The report should have triggered prompt, independent and impartial investigations into these allegations by the Congolese judicial system.

Instead, on 16 October 2014, the Minister of Interior, Richard Muyej Mangez, accused Scott Campbell of discrediting the national police, demoralizing its agents, and destabilizing the institutions of DRC. On behalf of the Congolese government, he declared Scott Campbell *persona non grata* and asked him to leave the country.

Scott Campbell was arbitrarily expelled from DRC because he was acting in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 1856 which authorizes the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUSCO), in collaboration with Congolese authorities, "to investigate human rights violations and publish its findings, as appropriate, with a view to putting an end to impunity, assist in the development and implementation of a transitional justice strategy, and cooperate in national and international efforts to bring to justice perpetrators of grave violations of human rights and international humanitarian law".

Amnesty International urges the DRC government to immediately release or else reveal the fate and whereabouts of all persons subjected to enforced disappearance. Those not released must be promptly brought before a civilian court, charged with a recognizable criminal offence, and must receive a fair trial. If remanded by the court, they must be held in an official place of detention with access to lawyers, doctors and family members.

In addition, the organization urges the Congolese authorities to bring to justice those responsible for ordering or carrying out extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances, irrespective of rank and status in proceedings which meet international fair trial standards. Police sections responsible for extrajudicial executions and enforced disappearances must also be brought under adequate oversight and made accountable for their actions.