

URGENT ACTION

ACTIVISTS' WHEREABOUTS UNKNOWN AFTER ARREST

Activists Arsene Katolo, Alain Muwaka, Oto Shaminga, Heritier Losomba, Miko Booto, Enoch Muanda and Mwanza are being held incommunicado at an unknown location in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). They were arrested on 11 September in the capital Kinshasa while distributing leaflets against plans to use voting machines in the upcoming elections.

Arsene Katolo, Alain Muwaka, Oto Shaminga, Heritier Losomba, Miko Booto, Enoch Muanda and Mwanza were arrested on 11 September in Kinshasa as they were handing out leaflets against controversial plans to use electronic voting machines in next month's election. The elections are scheduled for 23 December.

Amnesty International has received information from eyewitnesses that the seven activists were beaten up during the arrest before being taken to a police station in Matete, Kinshasa, and that the next day, intelligence agents from the National Intelligence Agency (Agence Nationale de Renseignements, ANR) picked them up and took them to an unknown location.

They have been in incommunicado detention since. Their families and lawyers have not been allowed to see them and they have not been presented in court. There is concern that they could be at risk of torture or other ill-treatment while in detention.

The activists are members of "Les Congolais Debout", a movement of Congolese activists opposed to human rights violations, and defending civil and political liberties in the country.

Amnesty International has documented several cases of DRC authorities unlawfully restricting civic space, including through arbitrary arrests and detention, ill-treatment and attacks on pro-democracy activists, human rights defenders and political opponents.

Amnesty International considers Arsene Katolo, Alain Muwaka, Oto Shaminga, Heritier Losomba, Miko Booto, Enoch Muanda and Mwanza to be prisoners of conscience, detained solely for their peaceful human rights work.

Please write immediately in French or your own language:

- Urging the DRC authorities to immediately and unconditionally release Arsene Katolo, Alain Muwaka, Oto Shaminga, Heritier Losomba, Miko Booto, Enoch Muanda and Mwanza detained solely for exercising their right to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly;
- Calling on them to ensure that, pending their release, the seven activists are not subjected to torture and other ill-treatment and are allowed access to their families and lawyers of their choosing;
- Urging them to investigate allegations that the seven activists were beaten up while in the custody of security officers and ensure anyone found responsible is brought to justice in fair trials.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 1 JANUARY 2019 TO:

Minister of Justice

Monsieur Alexis Tambwe Mwamba
Ministère de la Justice
228 Avenue de Lemera
BP 3137
Kinshasa-Gombe
DRC
Email: minjustdh@gmail.com

Salutation: Honourable Minister

Minister for human rights

Marie-Ange Mushobekwa
Ministère des droits humains
Place Royal
Kinshasa-Gombe
DRC
Email: mushobekwa.likulia@gmail.com

Salutation: Honourable Minister

Attorney General

Floribert Kabange Numbi
Procureur General de la République
Immeuble INSS
Boulevard du 30 Juin Kinshasa/Gombe
DRC

Email: florykan@yahoo.fr

Salutation: Attorney General

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. HER EXCELLENCY MS MARIE NDJEKA OPOMBO, Embassy of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, 45-49 Great Portland Street W1W 7LD, 020 7580 3931, Fax 020 7580 8713, missionrdclondres@gmail.com, www.ambardc-londres.gouv.cd Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

DRC's President Joseph Kabila has been in office since 2001 and was declared winner of the 2006 and 2011 elections. The Congolese Constitution limits presidential mandates to two consecutive terms of five years each. President Kabila's second and last mandate ended on 19 December 2016, but he has remained in power with his government delaying to organize elections.

Currently, elections are scheduled to be held on 23 December 2018. In August 2018, President Kabila announced his support for Emmanuel Ramazani Shadary as his successor in the upcoming elections.

The decision by the Independent National Electoral Commission (Commission Électorale Nationale Indépendante, CENI) to use voting machines in the upcoming elections has been opposed by the political opposition, civil society and some members of the international community over fears that they could be manipulated to rig the vote.