

URGENT ACTION

ACTIVISTS TO STAND TRIAL, RELEASED ON BAIL

Four human rights defenders from the youth movement *Lutte pour le Changement* (Struggle for Change, LUCHA) were released on bail following an appeal court's decision in Goma, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), on 29 April.

Tresor Akili, Vincent Kasereka, Gentil Mulume and Sylvain Mumbere, members of Lutte pour le Changement (Struggle for Change or LUCHA), an organization engaging youth activists, were arrested on 7 April while preparing for their 'filimbi' or 'whistle' action. LUCHA members had organised a daily symbolic action asking people to blow whistles from 5.00pm to 5.05 pm to demand the release of their colleagues held in secret detention in Kinshasa since 15 March.

The four defenders were arrested at 'Deux Lampes' roundabout, in Goma, where they were explaining their action to bystanders and distributing whistles to those interested. On 13 April, the public prosecutor signed a provisional arrest warrant and charged the activists with "undermining national security, inciting rebellion, distribution of pamphlets and participation in illegal protests". The four were then transferred to Munzenze prison in Goma the same day. On 25 April, the appeal court overturned the decision of a lower court in Goma that had denied the human rights defenders bail. However, due to administrative constraints, the four human rights defenders were only released on the afternoon of 29 April.

Amnesty International is pleased the activists are no longer in detention since they were detained and charged solely for peacefully exercising their rights to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association. Amnesty International considers that the charges against them should be dropped.

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

- Urging the Congolese authorities to drop all the charges against the four human rights defenders;
- Urging the authorities to uphold the rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly in the context of the upcoming elections in DRC.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 30 JUNE 2015 TO:

Minister of Justice and Human Rights

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

Minister of Interior
M. Evariste Boshab
Ministry of Interior
Avenue Roi Baudoin
Kinshasa/Gombe
DRC
Email: mininterieur@yahoo.fr

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 88/15. Further information: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/AFR62/1465/2015/en/>

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The 'filimbi' or whistle action was aimed at the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) authorities calling for the release of at least five human rights defenders who remain in secret detention in Kinshasa after security officials stormed a press conference held on 15 March at Eloko Makasi youth centre in Masina, Kinshasa, DRC. Approximately 30 people were arrested at the time, including activists from 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 on the same day, while the Senegalese and Burkinabé activists were later deported. An unknown number of Congolese activists, including Fred Bauma, who was representing LUCHA during the press conference, remain in secret detention. Since their arrest on 15 March, they have not had access to a lawyer or been allowed visits from their family members. Their precise location of detention remains unknown.

Name: Tresor Akili, Vincent Kasereka, Gentil Mulume and Sylvain Mumbere
Gender m/f: m

Further information on UA: 88/15 Index: AFR 62/1619/2015 Issue Date: 19 May 2015