

# URGENT ACTION

## TWO YEAR PRISON TERM FOR SIX LUCHA ACTIVISTS

Six members of the *Lutte pour le Changement* (LUCHA) youth movement have been sentenced to two years in prison on charges of “attempting to incite disobedience”. The six were arrested on 16 February in Goma, hours before a general strike held in protest against delays in organizing the 2016 general elections in Democratic Republic of Congo.

Rebecca Kavugho, Serge Sivyavugha, Justin Kambale Mutsongo, Melka Kamundu, John Anipenda and Ghislain Muhiwa were sentenced to two years in prison on 24 February immediately after closing arguments in their case were delivered by the prosecutor and the defence teams. They remain detained at Muzenze prison in Goma. Their lawyers intend to appeal this decision within 10 days.

In the early morning of 16 February, authorities forced their way into a house where the six LUCHA activists had spent the night preparing messages for the general strike, called for by the opposition and civil society. The general strike was in protest against attempts to delay preparations for the 2016 general elections, which would extend President Kabila's rule beyond the timeframe outlined in the Constitution of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

Amnesty International believes the six activists have been convicted solely for peacefully exercising their rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly, and considers them to be prisoners of conscience.

### Please write immediately in French or your own language:

- Calling on the DRC authorities to drop all charges against the six LUCHA activists in Goma and to immediately and unconditionally release them;
- Urging them to ensure that the six LUCHA activists are not subjected to torture and other ill-treatment while in detention.

### PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 11 APRIL 2016 TO:

#### Minister of Justice

Monsieur Alexis Tambwe Mwamba  
Ministry of Justice  
228 Avenue de Lemera  
BP 3137  
Kinshasa – Gombe  
DRC  
Email: minjustdh@gmail.com  
Salutation: Honourable Minister

#### Minister of Interior and Security

Professor Evariste Boshab  
Ministry of Interior and Security  
Avenue Roi Baudoin  
Kinshasa – Gombe  
DRC  
Email: ngomamundulu@gmail.com  
Salutation: Honourable Minister

#### And copies to:

#### Prime Minister

His Excellency Augustin Matata Ponyo  
Office of the Prime Minister  
5 Avenue Roi Baudoin  
Kinshasa – Gombe  
DRC  
Email: cabinet@primature.cd

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 37/16. Further information:  
<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr62/3462/2016/en/>

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### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The DRC's Constitution limits a presidential mandate to two consecutive five years terms. Tensions have increased as the incumbent President Kabila is prevented by the Constitution to seek another term after he was declared the winner of two consecutive elections in 2006 and 2011.

President Kabila has never declared his intention to stay in power beyond the Constitution's limit of terms. However, there have been several attempts by the ruling majority to change the Constitution to allow him to stay in office or extend his rule beyond the timeframe fixed by the Constitution.

LUCHA is a youth movement that was created in Goma, eastern DRC in 2012. It is a community based organization that holds sit-ins, demonstration and other actions to campaign for human rights and on social issues. LUCHA has been vocal in campaigning calling for the authorities to observe electoral deadlines in the Constitution, and for the president to respect term limits as enshrined in the Constitution.

The government has accused LUCHA of being a criminal movement, set up with the aim of disturbing public order. At least 19 people connected to LUCHA are currently in jail.

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

Further information on UA: 37/16 Index: AFR 62/3530/2016 Issue Date: 29 February 2016