

URGENT ACTION

TWENTY ACTIVISTS ARRESTED AFTER PEACEFUL SIT-IN

Twenty activists of the youth movement Lutte pour le Changement (LUCHA) were arrested during a peaceful sit-in in the city of Goma on 21 December. They were protesting against President Kabila's stay in power beyond the end of his second mandate on 19 December.

Activists with the youth movement Lutte pour le Changement (LUCHA) **Oswald Kulimushi, André Batundi, Rodrigue Kyamwami, Alvin Bendera, Gloire Mwanzavalere, Amitié Muhindo, William Bahati, Pascal Muhindo, Hercule Biringetse, Paulin Mahamba, Patrick Djuma, Shimi Bahati, Mubalama Kitungu, Rebecca Kabuo, Parfait Muhani, Luc Nkulula, Juvin Kombi, Espoir Muyisa, Antipas Kambale and Claudia Chuma** were arrested in the morning of 21 December in the city of Goma, North Kivu, in the east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

The youth movement had organised a peaceful sit-in in front of the governor's office following President Kabila's stay in power beyond 19 December, the last day of his second, and according to the Constitution, last mandate. They were holding banners saying "Nobody is above the law", "Bye Bye Kabila" and "Defending the constitution is not a crime".

The group is currently detained in police station P2 in Goma. They are prisoners of conscience, detained solely for having exercised their rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly.

Please write immediately in French or your own language:

- Urging the authorities to release the twenty activists detained in Goma immediately and unconditionally;
- Calling on them to ensure that the twenty activists are not subjected to any torture or other ill-treatment while in detention and are given prompt access to their family, a lawyer of their choosing and any medical attention they may require.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 1 FEBRUARY 2017 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 of Interior and Security

Monsieur Emmanuel Shadari Ramazani
Ministry of Interior and Security
Avenue Roi Baudouin
Kinshasa-Gombe
DRC
Email: mininterieur@yahoo.fr
Salutation: Honourable Minister

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. His Excellency Mr Barnabe Kikaya Bin Karubi, 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.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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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 a president to two consecutive terms. President Kabila's second and last mandate ended on 19 December, yet elections have not taken place. Following a national dialogue supported by the African Union, plans for elections were announced for April 2018 with an extension of President Kabila's mandate until that date. The majority of opposition parties and civil society rejected the outcome of the dialogue. A more inclusive dialogue, headed by the Catholic Church, is currently ongoing.

LUCHA is a youth movement created in Goma, the provincial capital of North Kivu in the DRC, in 2012. The movement is known for its peaceful actions. It organizes sit-ins, demonstrations and other actions to claim their rights and those of the people of DRC. They have continuously called for the organization of elections within constitutional deadlines and for respect of the presidential term limits outlined in DRC's Constitution.

The authorities have accused LUCHA of being a criminal movement, set up with the aim of disturbing public order.

In May 2016, LUCHA received Amnesty International's Ambassador of Conscience award for their peaceful activism. On 18 August, over forty activists met with President Kabila. During the meeting they presented their award and called on their President to step down at the end of his mandate.

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