

URGENT ACTION

LEADING DRC HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER ARRESTED

A prominent human rights defender has been detained as prisoner of conscience since 24 July in the south-east of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). His organization had recently published a report alleging state complicity in illegal mining at a uranium mine, and he is facing politically motivated charges.

Golden Misabiko, President of the *Association Africaine de défense des Droits de l'Homme* in Katanga province (ASADHO/Katanga), was arrested on 24 July by the intelligence services in the provincial capital, Lubumbashi. He is held at the Prosecutor's Office (*Parquet*), sleeping outdoors on a cardboard box because the holding cell is overcrowded and filthy.

On 29 July, the Lubumbashi High Court ordered that he should be detained for 15 days, for further investigation and possible trial on charges of "threatening state security" (*atteinte à la sûreté de l'Etat*) and "defamation" (*diffamation*). The court rejected a plea from his lawyers to release him on bail. The Katanga judicial authorities appear to have been put under political pressure to keep Golden Misabiko in detention.

The charges against Golden Misabiko relate to a report published by ASADHO/Katanga on 12 July about the Shinkolobwe uranium mine. The report alleged that military and civilian officials had been complicit in illegal mining at Shinkolobwe after the government closed the mine for reasons of national security and public safety, in January 2004. The report said that the DRC authorities had not done enough to secure the mine. It also criticised the lack of transparency in a 26 March agreement between the government and the French nuclear energy company AREVA, which grants AREVA rights to prospect and mine for uranium in the DRC.

On 28 July Katanga human rights activists held a peaceful protest, outside the Lubumbashi courthouse, against Golden Misabiko's detention.

PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in French or your own language:

- √ Demanding the immediate and unconditional release of Golden Misabiko, as he is a prisoner of conscience, detained solely for his lawful human rights work.
- √ Asking the government to ensure urgently that Golden Misabiko's conditions of detention are improved.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 10 SEPTEMBER 2009 TO:

President

Son Excellence Joseph Kabila
Président de la République
Palais de la Nation
Avenue de Lemera
Kinshasa-Gombe
Democratic Republic of Congo
E-mail: presipp@yahoo.fr
Salutation: Dear President
Kabila/Son Excellence Monsieur le
Président

Justice Minister

Luzolo BAMB I Lessa
Ministère de la Justice
228 Avenue de Lemera
BP 3137
Kinshasa-Gombe
République Démocratique du Congo
Salutation: Dear Minister / Monsieur
le Ministre

Governor of Katanga

Moise Katumbi Chapwe

Please leave a message
on the Governor's official website :
www.katanga.cd/misc/contact.php
Salutation: Dear Governor / Monsieur
le Gouverneur

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives of the DRC accredited to your country. Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

AMNESTY
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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The Lubumbashi High Court ordered the detention of Golden Misabiko on 29 July on the basis that the charges against him were, in their view, "extremely serious," with no further explanation. A local judicial official had earlier described the case against Golden Misabiko as "baseless" (*un dossier vide*). Lambert Mende, the government's official spokesperson and Minister of Communication and Media, however, described the ASADHO report as "criminal nonsense" (*inepties criminelles*).

On 21 July, just before Golden Misabiko's arrest, a delegation of the Provincial Security Council, composed of high-level provincial civil and military officials, accompanied by journalists, went to Shinkolobwe supposedly to investigate the allegations in the ASADHO/Katanga report. ASADHO/Katanga declined an invitation to take part in the visit, believing it was not a serious or independent inquiry into their allegations.

Golden Misabiko's detention coincided with a blunt attack on international human rights and environmental NGOs by Lambert Mende on 28 July, and a government shutdown of Radio France Internationale (RFI) broadcasts in the DRC on 26 July. Lambert Mende accused these organizations of attempting to undermine the government.

Shinkolobwe, around 150km from the provincial capital, Lubumbashi, was the source of uranium used in the atomic bombs dropped on Japan in 1945.

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