

PUBLIC

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Further Information on UA 43/07 (AFR 62/005/2007, 22 February 2007) - Death threat/fear for safety/fear of arbitrary arrest

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO (DRC)

Joseph Dunia Ruyenzi (m), lawyer

The illegal order to arrest lawyer (“Maître”) Joseph Dunia Ruyenzi was quashed on 23 February at an appeal court hearing held in Goma, eastern DRC. The Goma Prosecutor-General, who led the appeal on behalf of Maître Dunia, drew the court’s attention to this Urgent Action as an example of the international condemnation of the arrest order. Maître Dunia wishes to thank Amnesty International activists who mobilized in his support.

Maître Dunia had issued a legal challenge against the judge presiding over a fraud trial on 8 February, on the basis that the judge had a potential conflict of interest. The challenge was in full conformity with Congolese law. The judge, however, responded by arbitrarily ordering that Maître Dunia be imprisoned for six months for “contempt of court”. On 20 February, as Maître Dunia was preparing an appeal against the judge’s order, he was visited at his office by a man claiming to be a security service agent. The man told Maître Dunia that he should leave the country for his own safety. When asked why, the man told Maître Dunia that he should not “make trouble for judges”.

No further action is requested from the UA network. Many thanks to all who sent appeals. Amnesty International is monitoring Maître Dunia’s situation.