

14 July 2017

DRC: Human rights defender Nicolas Mbiya arbitrarily arrested

On 14 July 2017, human rights defender **Nicolas Mbiya** was arbitrarily arrested outside his home in Mbuji-Mayi in the Kasai region of the Democratic Republic of Congo. He is reportedly being detained by the Agence Nationale des Renseignements - ANR (National Intelligence Agency).

Nicolas Mbiya is an activist with **Lutte pour le Changement – LUCHA** (Fight For Change). [LUCHA](#) is a non-violent and non-partisan youth civil society movement founded in June 2012 in Goma, the capital of North Kivu. The movement advocates for social justice and accountability in the DRC through campaigns, and encourages Congolese citizens to fight for the promotion and respect of human rights. Most recently, LUCHA has been denouncing violence perpetrated by armed groups and the Congolese security forces in the Kasai region and has been campaigning for investigations into violence.

On 14 July 2017, at approximately 6am, Nicolas Mbiya was reportedly arrested outside his house in Mbuji-Mayi by officers believed to belong to the ANR. Nicolas Mbiya is understood to be detained at the ANR station in Mbuji-Mayi but has not been given a reason for his arrest. This is the third time that Nicolas Mbiya has been arbitrarily arrested in the last 8 months. On 15 May 2017, he was arrested along with four other LUCHA activists who had organised a peaceful sit-in to demand the publication of the electoral calendar. On 18 December 2016, he was arrested with another LUCHA activist for organising a peaceful protest and was detained for 45 days.

Front Line Defenders expresses concern for the arbitrary arrest of Nicolas Mbiya as it believes that it is part of a larger pattern of harassment against human rights defenders in the DRC who are advocating for the rule of law and for investigations into violence perpetrated by the Congolese security forces.

Front Line Defenders urges the authorities in the DRC to:

1. Immediately and unconditionally release Nicolas Mbiya, as Front Line Defenders believes that he is being held solely as a result of his legitimate and peaceful work in the defence of human rights;
2. Ensure that the treatment of Nicolas Mbiya while in detention adheres to the conditions set out in the *'Body of Principles for the Protection of All Persons under Any Form of Detention or Imprisonment'*, adopted by UN General Assembly resolution 43/173 of 9 December 1988;
3. Cease targeting all human rights defenders in the DRC and guarantee in all circumstances that they are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions including judicial harassment.