

25 May 2020

Democratic Republic of Congo: Killing of human rights defender Frédéric-Marcus Kambale during a peaceful protest

On 21 May 2020, human rights defender Frédéric-Marcus Kambale was shot and killed by a police officer during a peaceful protest organized in Beni, in North-Kivu. The peaceful march was organised to denounce the rising insecurity and resurgence of violence in the city.

[Frédéric-Marcus Kambale](#) was a human rights defender and member of the organization *Lutte pour le Changement* (Fight for Change – LUCHA). [LUCHA](#) is a non-violent and non-partisan youth civil society movement founded in June 2012 in Goma, North Kivu. The movement advocates for social justice and accountability in DRC through campaigns, and encourages Congolese citizens to fight for the promotion and respect of human rights.

On 21 May 2020, LUCHA organized a peaceful march in Beni to denounce the rise in urban crime and insecurity, and call on the authorities to ensure the safety of the population. The march started at Butsili stadium, near to where a young man was killed on the evening of 19 May by unknown assailants. As the demonstrators approached the Beni town hall, police arrived to disperse them, using tear gas bombs and live ammunition.

Human rights defender Frédéric-Marcus Kambale was shot in the head by a police officer and died as a result of his injuries. Two police officers suspected of being responsible for his death have been arrested.

Police arrested 19 LUCHA activists who had been participating in the protest, detaining them for several hours before releasing them later that day. One protester was injured during the police efforts to disperse the protesters and was taken to hospital.

This is the second time in six months that a LUCHA activist has been killed in similar circumstances. On 23 November 2019, LUCHA member Obadi Muhindo was [killed](#) in Beni during a peaceful demonstration, when members of the police force opened fire on the protesters with live ammunition.

Front Line Defenders strongly condemns the killing of Frédéric-Marcus Kambale, as it believes he has been targeted solely as a result of his legitimate work in defence of human rights and his exercise of freedom of peaceful assembly and association.

Front Line Defenders urges the authorities in DRC to:

1. Strongly and immediately condemn the killing of Frédéric-Marcus Kambale as it is believed to be directly motivated by his peaceful and legitimate human rights work;
2. Carry out an immediate, thorough and impartial investigation into the killings of Frédéric-Marcus Kambale and Obadi Muhindo, with a view to publishing the results and bringing those responsible to justice in accordance with international standards;
3. Guarantee in all circumstances that human rights defenders in DRC are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions.