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19 May 2022

Democratic Republic of Congo: Targeting of woman human rights defender Miriam Furaha

On 4 May 2022, military officers raided the offices of the non-governmental organization Dynamique des Femmes Leaders d'IRUMU (DYFELE) in search of woman human rights defender **Miriam Furaha** in the Irumu territory. The officers confiscated two computers during the raid. Prior to this raid, Miriam Furaha had been attacked several times in her home by men in military uniforms. The woman human rights defender has gone into hiding.

[Miriam Furaha](#) is a woman human rights defender and member of the non-profit organization Dynamique des Femmes Leaders d'IRUMU (DYFELE). [DYFELE](#) is a grass-roots NGO made up of women working to protect the rights of indigenous peoples, land rights, and social justice in the province of Ituri, North-Kivu. Since the instatement of the state of emergency over North-Kivu in May 2021, DYFELE and its members have continuously been targeted by law enforcement for their peaceful and legitimate work.

On 4 May 2022, military officers raided the offices of DYFELE, in search of woman human rights defender Miriam Furaha, who has gone into hiding due to several attacks against her. The officers confiscated two computers during the raid. Previously on 3 May 2022, three military officers and two police officers raided Miriam Furaha's home in search for her. Since they could not find the woman human rights defender, the officers proceeded to arrest all the household members without a warrant and detained them. During their arbitrary detention, the woman human rights defender's family were subjected to interrogation and ill-treatment, as the officers demanded to know where Miriam Furaha was. According to reports, the human rights defender's father was beaten by the officers. The officers also demanded to know who was "funding" the woman human rights defender. The family members were released later in the afternoon on 3 May 2022.

This is not the first time that Miriam Furaha has been targeted. On 24 March 2021, she was attacked in her home by unknown assailants a few hours after she appeared in various media outlets. During her public appearance, Miriam Furaha denounced the state of emergency and called for an end of the abuses committed by military officers in Ituri and its territories. While she survived the violent attack, the woman human rights defender was severely wounded and had to receive medical treatment for the injuries she sustained.

On 5 April 2022, Miriam Furaha publicly documented and denounced the support expressed by the Congolese army to the Force de Résistance Patriotique de l'Ituri (FRPI), an armed militia and political party. She was arrested soon after, without any warrant and detained for five days in the police station of Irumu without any proceedings or charges. On 15 April 2022, during a meeting held by military officers on security, Miriam Furaha denounced once again in front of the authorities the Congolese army's complicity with the FRPI militia. On 17 April 2022, the woman human rights defender was again attacked in her home by three individuals in military uniforms. Her home was vandalized and ransacked, and all her valuables taken by the assailants.

On 25 April 2022, Miriam Furaha was attacked in her home in Ituri by five men dressed in military uniforms. The assailants beat and tortured the woman human rights defender, threatened to kill her before leaving her for dead in her home. Due to the continued harassment and incessant attacks, the woman human rights defender has been forced into hiding.

Front Line Defenders is deeply concerned by the continuous attacks against woman human rights defender Miriam Furaha as it believes that she is being targeted solely as a result of her legitimate and peaceful work in defence of human rights. It is also concerned by the arbitrary detention, interrogation and ill-treatment of Miriam Furaha's family members, in retaliation for her work in the defence of human rights, and her denouncing of the state of emergency and abuses committed by military officers in Ituri and its territories.

Front Line Defenders urges the authorities of the Democratic Republic of Congo:

1. Carry out an immediate, thorough and impartial investigation into the attacks against Miriam Furaha and the allegation of ill-treatment of her family, with a view to publishing the results and bringing those responsible to justice in accordance with international standards;
2. Immediately cease all further harassment and targeting of Miriam Furaha and her family, as Front Line Defenders believes that the attacks against her and raid carried out at her home was solely as a result of her legitimate work in defence of human rights;
3. Guarantee in all circumstances that all human rights defenders in DRC are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions.