

**DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO: INTIMIDATION, THREATS AND
BREAK-IN AT THE HOME OF MR DISMAS KITENGE, CHAIRMAN OF THE LOTUS
GROUP, BY UNIDENTIFIED INDIVIDUALS**

Douala-Cameroon: REDHAC Urgent Appeal N°0024/26012024

Douala-Kisangani, 26 January 2024: The Human Rights Defenders Network in Central African (REDHAC) and its country-DRC coalition are deeply concerned by the threats and intimidation against Mr Dismas KITENGE, president of the Lotus group, at his home by unidentified individuals..



The facts

Between 2am and 4am on 16 and 17 January 2024, unidentified individuals broke into the home of Mr Dismas KITENGE in Kisangani, where he was staying with his family. They took a television and other valuables from various rooms in the house before fleeing in an unidentified vehicle.

From 18 to 19 January 2024, other unidentified individuals again attacked the home of Mr Dismas KITENGE, throwing stones.

From 21 to 22 January 2024, at around 2am, a car was seen in the vicinity of Mr Dismas KITENGE's home, with unidentified individuals on board.

On 22 January 2024, Mr Dismas KITENGE lodged a complaint against the unknown individuals for these acts with the Public Prosecutor at the Kisangani Tribunal de Grande Instance.

These acts of intimidation ceased after members of Mr Dismas KITENGE's family came to reinforce the security of the Defender's home.

A reminder,

On 10 January 2022, between 4pm and 6pm, Mr Dismas KITENGE received calls from a masked number and a call from an identifiable number, from unidentified persons claiming to be Congolese army generals. The latter were outraged by statements made by Mr Dismas KITENGE concerning the murder of a Republican Guard soldier on the night of 31 December 2021 to 1 January 2022 in Kisangani, Tshopo province.

According to our sources, these acts of intimidation followed Mr Dismas KITENGE's participation in the radio programme "Dialogue entre congolais" broadcast on Radio Okapi on 16 January 2024, devoted to analysing the parliamentary majority acquired by the Sacred Union in the Congolese National Assembly following the legislative elections of 20 December 2023.



Before appearing on this programme, Mr Dismas KITENGE had already analysed and criticised the conduct of these elections in writings on social networks dated 1 and 2 January 2024.

The Network of Human Rights Defenders in Central Africa (REDHAC) and its country-DRC coalition :

- Denounce all forms of reprisals by the administrative, judicial and military authorities in the form of shadowing, telephone tapping, death threats, arrests, intimidation and inhuman and degrading treatment;
- Denounce and condemn the repeated attacks on fundamental freedoms (freedom of association, demonstration, expression and information) in the DRC in particular and in Central Africa in general;
- Denounce the reprisals against human rights defenders, in particular those suffered by Mr Dismas Kitenge, other defenders and journalists who are simply doing their job to promote, protect and defend human rights;
- Firmly protest against this umpteenth attempt to kidnap and/or assassinate them.

Also, to the Government of the DRC, the Network of Human Rights Defenders in Central Africa (REDHAC) and its country-DRC coalition:

- Call for an end to these attacks and acts of intimidation, and for an independent, rigorous, impartial and transparent investigation to identify those responsible and bring them before an independent, competent and impartial tribunal;
- Demand that the physical, psychological and moral protection and safety of Mr Dismas KITENGE and his family be ensured;
- Demand an end to all forms of intimidation and reprisals against human rights defenders, who are only doing their job to promote, protect and defend human rights;
- Hold it responsible in the event of the enforced disappearance of Mr Dismas KITENGE and his family.

Finally, the Central African Human Rights Defenders Network (REDHAC) and its country-DRC coalition recommend that the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) and the United Nations demand that the Government of the DRC:

- Compliance with the United Nations Convention against Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment;
- Compliance with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.



FOR ANY URGENT ACTION

Useful address:

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We Defend

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