



REPUBLIC OF GABON: Arrest and release of Human Rights Defenders Mr. Fortuné EDOU ESSONO, coordinator of the National Union and his colleague Mr. Eric OTSETSE by uniformed military security.

### PRESS RELEASE

**Douala-Libreville December 10, 2021** : The Network of Human Rights Defenders in Central Africa (REDHAC) remains concerned about the increase in arrests of Human Rights Defenders in the Republic of Gabon.



On December 8, 2021, Mr. Fortuné EDOU ESSONO, coordinator of the National Union, and his colleague Mr. Eric OTSETSE were detained at the General Directorate of counter-intelligence and military security in Libreville and were accused of "calling for violence on Facebook". Thanks to the actions of Human Rights Defenders, they were released after 24 hours of detention.

**From all of the above:**

**The Human Rights Defenders Network in Central Africa (REDHAC):**

- Acknowledges the release of Mr. Fortuné EDOU ESSONO, coordinator of the National Union and his colleague Mr. Eric OTSETSE;
- Thanks all stakeholders who mobilized for this release.

REDHAC.

- Encourages the Gabonese government to effectively protect Human Rights Defenders by adopting a law on "Promotion and Protection of Human Rights Defenders", as proposed by REDHAC since 2018.

**Finally, REDHAC :**

- Reiterates its willingness and availability to always collaborate with the governments of Central Africa in general and Gabon in particular for the promotion and protection of Human Rights, the Protection and security of Human Rights Defenders in all circumstances.

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