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## **DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO PEACEFUL ACTIVISTS RELEASED ON BAIL**

On 24 July, human rights defenders Elisée Lwatumba Kasonia and Eric Muhindo Muvumbu were released on bail. They were arrested on 19 April while calling for a general strike to protest against increased deadly armed attacks in the north eastern territory of Beni. The two activists have been charged with “inciting civil disobedience” and “threatening an attack.” Amnesty International believes the charges, which remain pending, are baseless and must be dropped.

### **Please ask the Minister of Human Rights to:**

- Ensure that the charges against Elisée Lwatumba Kasonia and Eric Muhindo Muvumbu are dropped, the arbitrary restrictions imposed on their right to freedom of movement and expression are lifted, and that they are able to continue to do their vital human rights work without fear of further prosecution and/or reprisals.

### **Write to:**

Albert Fabrice Puela

Minister of Human Rights

Email: [fabricepuela@outlook.com](mailto:fabricepuela@outlook.com) or [puelaalbertfabrice@gmail.com](mailto:puelaalbertfabrice@gmail.com)

Salutation: Dear Minister

### **Please copy:**

Lohaka Yemba

Chargé d'affaires for the Embassy of the Democratic Republic of the Congo

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### **Additional Information**

Prior to Elisée Lwatumba Kaonia and Eric Muhindo Muvumbu's release, the Minister of Human Rights [publicly called for their release](#) during his visit in North Kivu on 14 July.

Elisée Lwatumba Kasonia is in his last year of high school. He has been denied the opportunity to complete pre-tests for the upcoming national exam which gives access to tertiary education. Eric Muhindo Muvumbu is married and a father of two children, aged two and eight. His small business

has gone bankrupt due to his prolonged absence, leaving his wife struggling to provide for their two children alone.

On 6 May, the DRC authorities announced a “State of Siege” for two provinces in the eastern part of the country, North Kivu and Ituri. This decision, according to the authorities, was meant to restore security and peace in the two provinces where decades of armed conflict and violence have left thousands of people dead and forced many more to flee their homes. Under this martial law, the civilian administration, including justice, was replaced by the military. Amnesty International is firmly opposed to the trials of civilians before military courts. To date, military courts are not fully operational, delaying the administration of justice to thousands of people in the two provinces. Amnesty International’s statement on the proclamation of the “State of Siege” is available [here](#).