

27 July 2016

DRC – Threats against human rights defender Jean-Chrysostome Kijana

On 21 July 2016 at approximately 9 pm, two unidentified men visited the home of Mr **Jean-Chrysostome Kijana** in Bukavu. As he was not there, they asked his wife and younger brother where he was and to speak with him. This visit is part of a larger pattern of threats from unidentified persons in the past few months at the office and the home of the human rights defender.

[Jean-Chrysostome Kijana](#) is the National President of the ***Nouvelle Dynamique de la Société Civile en RDC – NDSCI – (New Dynamic for Civil Society in the DRC)***, a human rights organisation that monitors and denounces human rights violations, promotes the rule of law, the right to education, and defends female victims of sexual violence. He is also the leader of the press agency, Syfia Grands Lacs in South Kivu and the President of ProxyMédias Libres, an organisation that defends and promotes freedom of the press and freedom of expression.

On 23 March 2016 Jean-Chrysostome Kijana and his colleagues at NDSCI brought a complaint to the Prosecution Office in Bukavu against the Provincial Deputy, Mr Frederic Batumike, following the assassination of one of their colleagues, Mr Evariste Kasali. This complaint was based on information which NDSCI discovered after the assassination that implicated the Provincial Deputy, in the incident. After receiving the NDSCI's complaint, the Prosecution Office opened a judicial file to investigate the case and on 21 June 2016, Frederic Batumike was arrested and is being detained in Bukavu central prison.

It is reported that colleagues of the Provincial Deputy declared that Jean-Chrysostome Kijana and the NDSCI were solely responsible for the arrest of Frederic Batumike. On 27 June 2016, the Director of the radio station, Iriba FM, was contacted by one of Frederic Batumike's lieutenants who asked him to hand over recordings of different shows on which Jean-Chrysostome Kijana appeared as well as his contact information, which he did.

On 14 July 2016, while Jean-Chrysostome Kijana was gone from his office, a former colleague of Frederic Batumike went to the NDSCI and alerted Jean-Chrysostome Kijana's colleagues that he is under imminent threat. On 21 July 2016, two men visited Jean-Chrysostome Kijana's home while he was absent and demanded to speak with him.

Front Line Defenders is concerned by this pattern of threats and harassment against Jean-Chrysostome Kijana and believes that these threats are motivated by his legitimate activities in the defence of human rights.

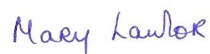
Front Line Defenders urges the authorities in DRC to:

1. Take all necessary measures to guarantee the physical and psychological integrity and security of **Jean-Chrysostome Kijana**;
2. Take measures to ensure that government officials or other public figures refrain from making statements or declaration stigmatising the legitimate work of Jean-Chrysostome Kijana;
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.

Front Line Defenders respectfully reminds you that the United Nations Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, adopted by consensus by the UN General Assembly on 9 December 1998, recognises the legitimacy of the activities of human rights defenders, their right to freedom of association and to carry out their activities without fear of reprisals. We would particularly draw your attention to Article 6 (b): *“Everyone has the right, individually and in association with others: (b) As provided for in human rights and other applicable international instruments, freely to publish, impart or disseminate to others views, information and knowledge on all human rights and fundamental freedoms,”* and to Article 12 (2): *“The State shall take all necessary measures to ensure the protection by the competent authorities of everyone, individually and in association with others, against any violence, threats, retaliation, de facto or de jure adverse discrimination, pressure or any other arbitrary action as a consequence of his or her legitimate exercise of the rights referred to in the present Declaration.”*

Please inform us of any actions that may be taken with regard to the above case.

Yours sincerely,



Mary Lawlor

Executive Director