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Democratic Republic of Congo: Human rights defender and LUCHA member Mwamisyo Ndungo King charged

On 2 April 2022, human rights defender and LUCHA member, **Mwamisyo Ndungo King** was arrested at the Mayor's Office in Goma. The human rights defender went to the Mayor's Office for a meeting with the Chief of Police at the request of the Chief of Police himself. The human rights defender is currently detained in the Goma central police station and has been charged with contempt to the army and contempt to public authorities under Article 87 of the Military Penal Code.

[Mwasimo Ndungo King](#) is a human rights defender and member of the organisation [Lutte pour le Changement \(Fight for Change – LUCHA\)](#). The human rights defender is known for his online opinion pieces, advocating for justice and freedom. LUCHA is a non-violent and non-partisan youth civil society movement founded in June 2012 in Goma, North Kivu. The movement advocates for social justice and accountability in DRC through campaigns, and encourages Congolese citizens to fight for the promotion and respect of human rights.

On 2 April 2022, Mwasimo Ndungo King went to meet the Chief of Police at the Mayor's Office in the Town Hall in Goma. The human rights defender was presented with a warrant and was immediately arrested. He was initially detained in a holding cell in the Town Hall, but was afterwards transferred to the Goma central police station on the night of 5 April 2022. Mwasimo Ndungo King has been charged with contempt to the army and contempt to public authorities under Article 87 of the Military Penal Code. The reasons for these charges were not listed in the arrest warrant. Mwasimo Ndungo King's lawyer, who has had access to the human rights defender, believes these charges are in relation to the human rights defender's online posts and open letters denouncing the authorities' inabilities in securing justice and protecting civilians. The human rights defender also drafted an open letter calling for the Governor of the Goma region to recognize the negative impact of the continued state of siege, and to end it.

This is not the first time that LUCHA members have faced reprisals for their peaceful human rights work. From 2020 to December 2021, over 19 LUCHA members were arbitrarily arrested and detained, while 2 were [killed](#) by security forces during peaceful demonstrations. LUCHA members and human rights defenders [Parfait Muhani](#) and [Ghislain Muhiwa](#) were provisionally released on 6 November 2021, after spending respectively 4 and 3 months in arbitrary detention.

Front Line Defenders is deeply concerned by the illegal arrest and detention of human rights defender Mwamisyo Ndungo King and the continued targeting of LUCHA, as it believes he is being targeted solely as a result of his peaceful and legitimate work in defence of human rights.

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

1. Immediately and unconditionally release Mwamisyo Ndungo King and drop all charges against him, as Front Line Defenders believes that he is being targeted solely as a result of his legitimate and peaceful work in the defence of human rights;
2. Cease all further harassment towards LUCHA members;
3. Take measures to ensure that government officials or other public figures refrain from making statements or declarations stigmatising the legitimate work of human rights defenders;
4. Guarantee in all circumstances that all human rights defenders in the Democratic Republic of Congo are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions.