

Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/drc-reporter-still-held-a-day-after-16-03-2015,47689.html>

Africa - DRC

Arbitrary arrests

Reporter still held a day after raid on news conference

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Journalist in Danger (JED) and Reporters Without Borders call for the immediate release of **Erick Izami**, a reporter for privately-owned TV station *Antenne A*, who has been held illegally by the National Intelligence Agency (ANR) since his arrest while covering a news conference yesterday afternoon in Kinshasa.

Four other reporters – *Agence France-Presse* photographer **Federico Scoppa**, two *BBC* journalists and a woman reporter for Belgian radio and TV broadcaster *RTBF* – were arrested at the time but were released after being held for a few hours at ANR headquarters. Their phones were confiscated.

They were all covering a news conference that Congolese human rights activists gave together with colleagues from Senegal and Burkina Faso to discuss “committed citizen action” and peaceful demonstrations, and to launch a new group called Filimbi (Whistle-blows).

“We condemn these abrupt arrests and the way that intelligence officials carried out this raid with the aim of preventing journalists from doing their work,” JED and Reporters Without Borders said. *“Arresting reporters in the course of their work is a flagrant violation of freedom of information. At the same time, preventing debate and dialogue about new forms of civil society activism is an unacceptable act of censorship at a time when the Democratic Republic of Congo should be doing everything possible to prepare for the coming democratic elections. This arbitrary and authoritarian behaviour shows that any possibility of a public debate scares the government.”*

JED and Reporters Without Borders added: *“We urge the ANR leadership and government officials responsible for security and the media to release Izami immediately and unconditionally, and to stop trying to intimidate the country’s media.”*

Many of the news conference organizers were also arrested. They included dozens of Congolese members of the new Filimbi movement, as well as Oscibi Johann of Burkina Faso’s “Balais Citoyen” movement and Fadel Barro, the coordinator of Senegal’s “Y en a Marre” movement.

“Balais Citoyen” and “Y en a Marre” have helped to implement political transitions in Burkina Faso and Senegal. Government spokesman Lambert Mende told the *BBC* that the detained news conference participants were *“military instructors who were preparing an insurrection.”*

The DRC government has repeatedly resorted to censorship and attempts to intimidate the media in recent months. Check the [DRC page of the Reporters Without Borders website](#) for details about these violations of the right to information.
