

Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/rd-congo-katanga-journalist-held-for-past-22-07-2013,44955.html>

Africa - DRC

Incompetent authorities

Katanga journalist held for past nine days, TV station closed

22 July 2013

Reporters Without Borders is alarmed by local TV station director **Simplexe Musangu's** detention for the past nine days in the southeastern province of Katanga on a charge of inciting civil disobedience because his station broadcast a Katanga secessionist group's message after being taken over at gunpoint.

The head of *Radio Télévision ya Lisano*, a station based in Kolwezi (300 km west of the provincial capital, Lubumbashi), Musangu was arrested by the local branch of the National Intelligence Agency (ANR) on 13 July and was transferred to Kolwezi's Dilala prison two days later. At the same time, Kolwezi court officials executed a court order closing the TV station for 30 days.

"The behaviour of the Kolwezi authorities is incomprehensible and unjust," Reporters Without Borders said. "It would also be laughable if the freedom of a journalist and his TV station were not at stake. Musangu and his staff have demonstrated their innocence and good faith. Gunmen forced them to broadcast the offending message."

Reporters Without Borders added: "We urge the Kolwezi prosecutor's office to free Musangu at once, drop all the charges against him, and order the reopening of his TV station without delay."

Armed members of "Bakata Katanga" (Cut Katanga), a separatist movement, surrounded *Radio Télévision ya Lisano* at around 5 a.m. on 12 July and forced its technicians to record a statement by its leader, Justin Kulutwe, proclaiming himself president of the republic of Katanga.

The station's employees nonetheless managed to suspend transmission shortly after they had begun broadcasting the message. At the same time, police arrived at the station and arrested two Bakata Katanga members. *Radio Télévision ya Lisano* subsequently reported that it had been taken over by force and, as evidence, broadcast a passage from the separatist group's message.

Although Musangu alerted the mayor, the local judge and the local ANR representative during the takeover of the station, he was arrested on the morning of 13 July, was held in a cell at the prosecutor's office and was transferred to the city's prison two days later.

One of his colleagues, **Stéphane Kasongo**, was also arrested on 15 July for objecting to his transfer to prison and has been held overnight before being released.

Democratic Republic of Congo is ranked 142nd out of 179 countries in the [2013 Reporters Without Borders press freedom index](#).

Also, [Read the press release issued today](#), National Press Day in the DRC, by Journalist in Danger, Reporters Without Borders' local partner organization.

Photograph: A man listens to his radio (Marco Longari / AFP)

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