

# Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/republique-democratique-du-congo-journalist-imprisoned-in-tshikapa-12-04-2011,40018.html>

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Africa - Democratic Republic of Congo

Electoral countdown

## Journalist freed on bail after three days in pre-trial detention

12 April 2011

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Reporters Without Borders has just learned from Journalist in Danger, its partner organization in Democratic Republic of Congo, that **Samy Mbeto** of *Radio Kilimanjaro*, a community radio station based in Tshikapa (in the central province of Kasai-Occidental), was released on payment of 110 US dollars in bail today after being held since 9 April

He has been told not to leave the province and to report to prosecutors every Tuesday and Friday.

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### **12.04.2011 - Journalist imprisoned in Tshikapa eight months ahead of presidential election**

**Samy Mbeto** of *Radio Kilimanjaro*, a community radio station based in Tshikapa (in the central province of Kasai-Occidental) has been detained since 9 April on charges of "insulting the authorities" and "defaming politicians" for urging his listeners to mistrust election campaign associations being set up prematurely by certain politicians before the legally permitted period.

Mbeto is being held under a provisional arrest warrant issued by deputy prosecutor Thomas Siama Sylvanus, who has produced no evidence to support the charges, according to Journalist in Danger, the Reporters Without Borders partner organization in Democratic Republic of Congo. He has also not been allowed to see a lawyer.

"Mbeto's arrest does not bode well for the degree of freedom that journalists will be allowed for commenting on the activities of Congolese politicians in the run-up to the presidential elections in eight months' time," Reporters Without Borders said, calling for his immediate and unconditional release.

"In a country where press freedom violations are already frequent and harassment of journalists is increasing as the elections approach, especially in the provinces, we fear that such incidents will become more common during the campaign."

In an open letter to President Joseph Kabila and in a question put to him at a news conference while he attended a summit of French-speaking countries in Montreux in late 2010, Reporters Without Borders called for a moratorium on arrests of journalists in the DRC. The request was unfortunately ignored.

"The jailing of Mbeto is a direct consequence of the government's lack of interest in protecting journalists covering political issues and the election campaign," Reporters Without Borders added.

For more information in French about Mbeto's arrest and the conditions in which he is being held, [read the Journalist in Danger release](#).

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