

# Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/republique-democratique-du-congo-call-to-ruling-party-politicians-26-08-2011,40854.html>

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Africa - Democratic Republic of Congo

Pre-election threats

## Call to ruling party politicians after threats and attacks on journalists

26 August 2011

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Reporters Without Borders strongly supports the "march of anger" by journalists and press freedom activists that its partner organization, Journalist in Danger, is organizing today in Kinshasa to condemn physical and verbal violence against journalists and to send politicians a strong signal of their determination to defend their profession and freedom of expression.

At the end of the march, they plan to hand in a written appeal to Evariste Boshab, National Assembly speaker and secretary-general of the ruling People's Party for Reconstruction and Democracy (PPRD), for PPRD member Yves Kisombe to be stripped of his position as a parliamentary representative.

"We urge you to heed the concerns of Congolese journalists," Reporters Without Borders said in a letter yesterday to Boshab. "With three months to go to the presidential and parliamentary elections scheduled for late November, a major event for the Congolese nation, it is essential to guarantee journalists' freedom of expression and its citizens' right to information.

"As PPRD secretary-general, you must remind your party's representatives and members of their duty to respect journalists' freedom and physical integrity. Political rivalry is normal in a democracy, especially during an election campaign, but attempts to intimidate or neutralize journalists in the name of political combat, is unacceptable."

Earlier this month, Kisombe used extremely violent language to insult and threaten **Eugénie Ntumba**, the editor-in-chief of the television station *RTVS1*. In response, journalists' organizations and the heads of the leading news media announced a six-month embargo on media coverage of Kisombe's activities and the creation of a support network for Ntumba.

**Serge Kembila**, a cameraman employed by *RTG@*, a Kinshasa-based TV station that is part of *L'Avenir*, a media group owned by a parliamentarian who has just left the PPRD, was physically attacked while filming Boshab give a speech during a PPRD congress in Kinshasa's Martyrs Stadium on 19 August.

He told *Journalist in Danger* that the PPRD secretary-general's bodyguards and members of his security service attacked and beat him after noticing the name of his media on his press vest and took his cassette, accusing him of filming the stadium's empty seats.

Finally, a plot is reportedly under way to kill **Kizito Mushizi**, a journalist based in Bukavu, the capital of the eastern province of Sud-Kivu. The former director of *Radio Maendeleo*, a local community radio station, and former provincial president of the Congolese Press National Union (UNPC), Mushizi is now provincial press spokesman for the opposition Union for the Congolese Nation (UNC).

According to information obtained by Mushizi, the plot to kill him was prepared at a meeting in Bukavu on 11 August that was attended by eight people, including ruling party members and three soldiers.

The alleged plot is said to be motivated by fear that Mushizi, a respected public figure, could

mobilize public support for the opposition UNC. His reputation and popularity in Sud-Kivu are the result of his years as a high-profile journalist and his defence of media freedom.

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