

Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/rd-congo-radio-station-manager-still-held-22-08-2013,44955.html>

Africa - DRC

Absurd situation

Radio station manager still held, although station now back on the air

22 August 2013

Reporters Without Borders reiterates its call for the immediate release of **Simplexe Musangu**, a radio station manager in Kolwezi, in the southeastern province of Katanga, who has been detained since 13 July because rebel gunmen forced him to broadcast a message calling for Katanga's independence.

The authorities still have not released Musangu, although a prosecutor in the Katangan capital of Lubumbashi gave his permission for Musangu's radio station, *Radio Télévision ya Lisano*, to resume broadcasting on 20 August, after being silenced for 37 days.

"The lifting of the order suspending *Radio Télévision ya Lisano* will not be a victory for freedom of information until its manager has been released," Reporters Without Borders said.

"Musangu is still being held by the National Intelligence Agency although his station has been allowed to resume broadcasting. This is absurd. We urge the Katangan authorities to order his immediate and unconditional release."

After his arrest, Musangu was held in Kolwezi's Dilala prison until 9 August, when he was moved to a National Intelligence Agency detention centre in Lubumbashi without being taken before a judge.

It should be noted that *Radio Télévision ya Lisano* was forced to stay off the air for 37 days although the suspension order for only 30 days.

22.07.2013 - Katanga journalist held for past nine days, TV station closed

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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