



"PWYP / Africa is concerned about the safety of civil society actors in Central African Republic and Equatorial Guinea"

At its first meeting in Accra (Ghana) on the 4th and 5th of October 2011, the Africa Steering Committee of the Publish What You Pay coalition discussed several issues including those related to the protection and security of its members who work for increased transparency and accountability in the extractive industries around the continent.

In this regard, concerns were raised on the security situation of civil society actors and members of Publish What You Pay in Equatorial Guinea and Central African Republic.

With regard to Equatorial Guinea, the Africa Steering Committee was informed that on July 28th, 2011 the Minister of the Interior had ordered the suspension of a training workshop organized by CEID (Centro de Estudios e Iniciativas para el Desarrollo) for leaders of associations and NGOs based in the mainland. The seminar focused on the management of civil society organizations and in our view it was suspended without any just cause.

As per the Central African Republic, the Africa Steering Committee was informed of the arrest, dated September 16, 2011, of five civil society actors who were traveling to Bakouma to work with local communities. The following people were arrested and detained in prison until September 22, 2011: PASSE SANAND Patrice (OCDN/PCQVP), NGAKOLA Celestin (APEDD), DIMASSE Yam (GALDP), KPANDINDI Achille Martin (ACAPEE/PCQVP), BAGAZA Dimy (OCDH /PCQVP) et KAPELLE Jan (CAPACITY FOR DEVELOPMENT).

Given this resurgence of attacks against the fundamental rights of civil society actors and members of Publish What You Pay in Africa, the Africa Steering Committee strongly condemns these acts of the Governments of the Central African Republic and Equatorial Guinea and calls on them to ensure the respect of fundamental rights of freedom of expression and association and meet their commitments in the framework of international legal instruments relating to the respect of human rights.

In particular, the Africa Steering Committee requests the Government of the Central African Republic to respect the terms of the requirement 6 of the new rules of the Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative that states that "The government is required to ensure that civil society is fully, independently, actively and effectively engaged in the process", meaning that the fundamental rights of civil society representatives must be respected and protected (requirement 6.i. of the new rules).

Done in Accra on 5 October 2011