

Publish What You Pay Public Statement

Democratic Republic of Congo: Publish What You Pay calls for the immediate release of transparency activist Golden Misabiko

London, 29 July 2009: Golden Misabiko, Chair of the African Association for the Protection of Human Rights (ASADHO) in Katanga, was arrested on 24 July and remains in custody in Lubumbashi. Timothée Mbuya, Vice-Chair of ASADHO/Katanga, was also arrested on 24 July but subsequently released on the same day. ASADHO is a member of Publish What You Pay (PWYP) Democratic Republic of Congo.

Both men were interrogated in Lubumbashi by members of the Congolese intelligence agency (Agence nationale de renseignements, ANR). Misabiko has been charged with "undermining State security" and "making defamatory statements" and is awaiting trial.

Misabiko, a human rights and transparency advocate, together with local civil society groups, campaigns for increased transparency and accountability in the management of mineral wealth in the province of Katanga, a copper and cobalt rich region. He has been arrested and intimidated several times in the past for his human rights activities.

ASADHO/Katanga released a report on 12 July 2009 about the Shinkolobwe uranium mine denouncing state authorities for supporting illegal and dangerous mining and for signing a contract with the French nuclear group AREVA under opaque circumstances.

The Democratic Republic of Congo is one of the 21 resource rich African countries implementing the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI)**, a global initiative for increased transparency in the oil, gas and mining sectors. The participation of independent civil society is a fundamental component of the multi-stakeholder nature of the EITI and Congolese civil society organisations are playing an active role to ensure that their country becomes fully compliant with the initiative.

PWYP calls for the immediate release of Golden Misabiko and asks for all charges against him to be dropped.

PWYP urges the Congolese government to ensure the free participation of civil society in debates on the management of Congo's mineral resources and to safeguard the security of transparency advocates.

Notes:

* Publish What You Pay (PWYP) is a global civil society coalition with over 300 member groups who work together for greater transparency in the oil, gas and mining industries.

** The EITI is a global multi-stakeholder initiative for disclosure of company payments and government revenues from oil, gas and mining. The participation of independent civil society is a fundamental component of the multi-stakeholder nature of the EITI, which champions dialogue between governments, industry, and civil society. DR Congo joined EITI in 2005 and has a deadline of March 2010 to become fully compliant with the initiative.

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