

25 March 2021

## Republic of Congo: Arbitrary arrest and detention of human rights defender Alexandre Ibacka Dzabana

On 11 March 2021, human rights defender **Alexandre Ibacka Dzabana** was arrested by police officers in front of his home and taken to the Direction General de la Surveillance du Territoire in Brazzaville, where he has remained in detention since his arrest.

[Alexandre Ibacka Dzabana](#) is a human rights defender and president of the Association M22, a citizen movement advocating for improved respect and consideration for civil and political rights in the country. The Association also advocates against corruption and governance issues in Congo and is a member of the international campaigning platform "Tournons La Page". Alexandre Ibacka Dzabana is also the coordinator of the Congolese Platform of Human Rights and Democracy NGOs.

On 11 March 2021, Alexandre Ibacka Dzabana was arrested in front of his home in Brazzaville by police officers, who did not provide a warrant for the arrest. The human rights defender was then taken to the Direction General de la Surveillance du Territoire in Brazzaville, the national intelligence directorate, where he remains in detention and has been denied access to his lawyer and family members. He is yet to be brought before a judge, and both the 72-hour pretrial detention period and the period for possible extension have elapsed.

The information that Alexandre Ibacka Dzabana had been arrested was made public the following day, on 12 March, when a government spokesperson mentioned his arrest during a radio interview. According to the spokesperson, the human rights defender is accused of allegedly being in contact with exiled Congolese military officers in preparation for a coup and undermining the current electoral process. Local human rights defenders insist that these accusations are fabricated and an attempt to prevent Alexandre Ibacka Dzabana from organising demonstrations or protests ahead of the presidential election, which took place on 21 March.

Front Line Defenders is seriously concerned by the arbitrary arrest and detention of human rights defender Alexandre Ibacka Dzabana as it strongly believes that they are directly linked to his peaceful and legitimate work in defence of human rights, and an attempt to prevent him carrying out this work ahead of the recent election. Front Line Defenders is also concerned by the lack of information provided by the authorities in relation to Alexandre Ibacka Dzabana's detention, his physical and psychological well-being and his lack of access to his lawyer and family since being detained.

### Front Line Defenders urges the authorities in Republic of Congo to:

1. Immediately and unconditionally release Alexandre Ibacka Dzabana, as Front Line Defenders believes that he is being targeted solely as a result of his legitimate and peaceful work in the defence of human rights;
2. Guarantee the physical and psychological integrity of Alexandre Ibacka Dzabana while in detention and grant him access to his lawyer and family.
3. Cease targeting all human rights defenders in Congo and guarantee in all circumstances that they are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions including arbitrary arrest.