

16 December 2021

## **Democratic Republic of Congo: Harassment and death threats against human rights defender Kizito Bin Hangi**

On 22 November 2021, around 3 am human rights defender **Kizito Bin Hangi** had the windows of his home **in Beni** broken by unidentified individuals throwing rocks. The defender's attempts to make the Beni authorities start an investigation on this incident **and threats that preceded this attack** remain unsuccessful.

Kizito Bin Hangi is a human rights defender and a member of the Association Africaine des droits de l'homme (ASADHO), in Beni, North Kivu. ASADHO is a non profit organisation that works on corruption and promotes human rights. The human rights defender is the monitoring officer for ASADHO, and the former president of the Coordination Urbaine de la Société Civile de Beni.

On 16 November 2021, Kizito Bin Hangi issued a press release evaluating the ongoing state of siege **in the Democratic Republic of Congo**. On 17 November, the human rights defender gave an interview on Radio France International, where he stated that despite the state of siege announced six months ago, the Congolese people were not any safer. This statement came in the wake of an attack occurred on 11 November 2021 by rebels belonging to the Forces Démocratiques Alliées (ADF). On 18 November 2021, the human rights defender began to receive anonymous phone calls threatening him for his human rights work. The callers warned him to stop speaking out about the state of siege and the ADF. Late in the night on the 22 November 2021, unknown individuals hurled rocks at Kizito Bin Hangi's home, breaking a window. On 24 November 2021, ASADHO, on behalf of the human rights defender, drafted a complaint that was submitted to the President of the Committee on Urban Security in Beni, the headquarters of the national police in Beni and the Military Prosecution Office of Beni. There has been no response from the authorities so far and the human rights defender is fearing further reprisals for his human rights work.

Front Line Defenders is deeply concerned by the harassment of human rights defender Kizito Bin Hangi, as it believes he is being targeted solely in response to his peaceful and legitimate work as a human rights defender.

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

1. Carry out an immediate, thorough and impartial investigation into the death threats against Kizito Bin Hangi, with a view to publishing the findings and bringing those responsible to justice in accordance with international standards;
2. Ensure and protect the physical and psychological integrity of Kizito Bin Hangi and his family;

3. Guarantee in all circumstances that all human rights defenders in the Democratic Republic of Congo are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions.