Democratic Republic of the Congo

Co-ordinating Committee for Civil Society Advocacy on Natural Resource Governance

PRESS RELEASE No. 05/011/2026

CALL FOR AN IMMEDIATE END TO THE HARASSMENT OF MR SERGE ILUNGA SHIMATU, CO-ORDINATOR OF THE RCEN AND ADVOCATE FOR TRANSPARENCY IN THE MINING SECTOR IN MITWABA

Civil society organisations working on natural resource governance in the Democratic Republic of the Congo express their deep concern at the summons issued by the National Intelligence Agency (ANR) to Mr Serge Ilunga Shimatu, coordinator of the Network of Environmental Communicators (RCEN), following a complaint lodged by the administrator of the Mitwaba territory after his organisation denounced the alleged irregular collection of 1,000 FC per tonne of cassiterite in that territory.

Whilst the Secretary-General for Mines had officially requested the Haut-Katanga Provincial Division of Mines and Geology to produce a detailed report on the allegations concerning the alleged collection of a tax of 1,000 FC per tonne of cassiterite in the Mitwaba territory, the administrator of the Mitwaba territory has lodged a complaint with the National Intelligence Agency (ANR) against Mr Serge Ilunga Shimatu, coordinator of the Network of Environmental Communicators (RCEN).

Civil society organisations regret this move and believe it diverts attention from the main objective, which is to establish the facts and address the concerns raised. They consider that efforts should be prioritised towards producing the report requested by the Secretary-General for Mines and clarifying the allegations made, rather than taking actions that could be perceived as a form of intimidation or pressure on those working to promote transparency and good governance in the mining sector.

At a time when the Democratic Republic of the Congo is engaged in the validation process for the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), civil society organisations reiterate that it is essential to ensure a safe and supportive environment for citizens to voice their concerns and for organisations working towards transparency, accountability and the responsible management of natural resources to carry out their work.

Civil society organisations condemn any form of harassment, intimidation or reprisals targeting human rights defenders and civil society actors engaged in promoting good governance in the extractive sector. They call for an immediate end to any action that may infringe upon the rights and freedoms of Mr Serge Ilunga Shimatu and the members of the RCEN in the legitimate exercise of their civic activities.

In light of the above, civil society organisations call on:

- the administrator of the Mitwaba territory to withdraw his complaint and to put an end to any action that could be perceived as a form of harassment or intimidation against the RCEN coordinator;
- the Director-General of the ANR to ensure respect for fundamental rights and freedoms and to take appropriate measures against any officer found to be responsible for acts of harassment or intimidation against human rights defenders and civil society actors;
- human rights networks, civil society organisations and all relevant partners to take action to protect civic space, freedom of expression and citizen participation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

For transparency cannot be strengthened by silencing those who contribute to its advancement.

Done in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, 12 November 2026

List of signatory organisations

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