



Press release
For Immediate Release

Fred Bauma, Executive Director of Ebuteli, arbitrarily detained and defamed

Kinshasa, February 7, 2024 - The Ebuteli Research Institute is relieved at the release of Fred Bauma, its Executive Director. On February 3 in Kinshasa, while taking part with other citizens in a peaceful rally to denounce the 600-day occupation of the town of Bunagana, in the east of the DRC, by the M23, Fred Bauma was arbitrarily arrested and detained on the premises of the National Intelligence Agency (*Agence Nationale de Renseignement*, ANR), in violation of Congolese criminal procedure.

The reasons for this arrest, which took place in front of the Congolese Parliament and was carried out by individuals in civilian clothes, were not immediately communicated to Fred Bauma, nor to the six other people arrested at the same time. Fred Bauma was denied contact with his family and lawyer.

During the first phase of his detention in the ANR premises located behind the Constitutional Court on Avenue Mwene-Ditu, before being transferred to the ANR's DSI jail opposite the Prime Minister's Office, Fred Bauma was beaten and subjected to inhumane and degrading treatment, in violation of the fundamental rights guaranteed by the Congolese constitution and international conventions.

Ebuteli would also like to clarify that its Executive Director did not take part in any meeting between political and civil society representatives at the Centre d'études pour l'action sociale (Cepas) on January 4 and 5, contrary to what has been suggested in defamatory publications on social networks. Fred Bauma was in no way associated with the initiative made public and discussed at the meeting.

Ebuteli calls on the *Conseil Supérieur de l'Audiovisuel* (CSAC), as regulator, and the ministry in charge of the media, as the supervisory authority, to guarantee a healthy media landscape, thus fostering constructive, informed debate that respects ethical principles.

Finally, Ebuteli would like to reiterate that it is an independent Congolese research center, and conducts its work in a rigorous and non-partisan manner, in strict compliance with Congolese legislation.

For further information, please contact

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