



DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

**Human Rights Committee Consideration of the fourth Periodic Report of
Democratic Republic of the Congo**

Submission

Amsterdam, 18 September 2017

LAWYERS FOR LAWYERS FOUNDATION

PO Box 7113

1007 JC Amsterdam

The Netherlands

T +31 (0) 20 717 16 38

E Info@lawyersforlawyers.org

@ www.lawyersforlawyers.org

I Introduction

Submitting Party

1. Lawyers for Lawyers (L4L) is an independent Netherlands foundation, funded by lawyers' donations. The foundation was established in 1986 and has special consultative status with ECOSOC since 2013.¹
2. L4L promotes the proper functioning of the rule of law through a free and independent exercise of the legal profession, in conformity with international law, including but not limited to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers of the United Nations (Basic Principles).² We support lawyers across the world who are threatened or suppressed as a result of discharging their professional functions and we promote the proper role of lawyers.³
3. On 1 May 2017, the Human Rights Committee ("the Committee") adopted a List of Issues in relation to the fourth period report of the Democratic Republic of the Congo ("DRC"),⁴ in response to which the DRC – has not yet - submitted a reply.
4. During its 121th session, from 16 October to 10 November 2017, the Committee will consider the fourth report submitted by the DRC under article 40 of the Covenant and adopt concluding observations that will assist the DRC in the implementation of the Covenant. In the context of this review, Lawyers for Lawyers wishes to provide comments on the questions raised in the List of Issues⁵ (hereafter: "LoI"), and address issues that are not raised in the List of Issues with a view to getting them appropriately addressed during the dialogue with the State.

II Executive Summary

Issues

5. This submission outlines L4L's key areas of concern about the failure of the Congolese government to comply with its international human rights commitments to guarantee effective access to justice and the legal services provided by independent legal professionals. The Basic Principles require States to ensure the right to equality before courts and tribunals and to a fair trial, in accordance with Article 14 of the ICCPR.

¹For more information visit our website: <http://www.advocatenvooradvocaten.nl/about-us/>

² Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers, adopted by the Eight United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, Havana, Cuba, 27 August to 7 September 1990 ('Basic Principles').

³ For more information visit our website: <http://www.advocatenvooradvocaten.nl/what-we-do/>

⁴ Liste de points, CCPR/C/CODQ/4, GE 17-06936 (F) (« LoI »).

⁵ Liste de points, CCPR/C/CODQ/4, GE 17-06936 (F) (« LoI »).

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6. In its List of Issues, the Committee requested the Congolese authorities to 'comment on allegations of judicial persecution, threats or violations against journalists, human rights defenders and political opponents'. The Committee also asked the authorities to provide information on investigations, prosecutions and sanctions imposed on those responsible for such acts.⁶
 7. In this report, Lawyers for Lawyers wishes to provide comments on the questions raised in the List of Issues, and address issues that were not raised in the List of Issues with a view to getting them appropriately addressed during the dialogue with the State, with respect to the situation of lawyers in the Democratic Republic Congo. At times, it is impossible to state with certainty whether particular lawyers are targeted due to their professional activities, or their political affiliations, or both. This report intends to address only examples of lawyers being threatened or intimidated because of their professional activities, and not their political affiliation.
 8. The Congolese authorities do not always uphold the necessary guarantees for the proper functioning of the legal profession in practice. Lawyers are regularly subjected to threats, intimidation and improper interference. Some lawyers are even subjected to disbarment, disciplinary and/or criminal proceedings, in connection to their legitimate professional activities. As a result, lawyers are not in an equal position to represent their clients. We therefore call on the Committee to make the following recommendations:

Recommendations

- I. **The DRC should take measures to prevent the harassment of lawyers and attempts to impede or interfere on improper grounds with their defence of clients, in accordance with Article 14 of the Covenant and articles 16 and 18 of the Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers.**
- II. **The DRC should take all necessary measures to prevent that lawyers suffer or be threatened with prosecution, disciplinary action or other sanctions on improper grounds, in accordance with article 14 of the Covenant and article 16 of the Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers.**
- III. **The DRC should take measures to guarantee the effective protection of the right of freedom of expression of lawyers as set out in article 19 of the ICCPR and Basic Principle 23, in particular their right to take part in public discussion of matters concerning the law, the administration of justice and the promotion and protection of human rights, without suffering professional restrictions by reason of their lawful action.**

⁶ Paragraph 25 of the LOI, CPR/C/COD/Q/4.

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- IV. The DRC should strengthen the role and organisation of the bar associations in the DRC and to acknowledge and promote their independence of the state and the courts and the vital role they play for the administration of justice. We recommend that the DRC establishes well-organised bar associations in all districts and strengthens the capacities of the “Barreaux” and maintains and improves the training programme for lawyers as far as it concerns the knowledge and application of international treaties, the Covenant, the functioning of international institutions such as the African Court on Human and Peoples’ Rights and the role of lawyers.**
- V. Adoption of the Draft bill for the Protection of Human rights defenders by parliament, as was adopted by the Senate on 10 May 2017, (*Proposition de loi relative a la protection et a la responsabilité du defenseurs des droits humains*) by parliament (by the Assemblée Nationale) and an immediate and fast implementation of this Act, notably the measures to be taken as stated in articles 18 until 21 of this Act, concerning the obligation of the State to take measures for the protection of human rights defenders and to prosecute any offenders of threats to human rights defenders.**

III Substantive Part -

The implementation of article 14 of the Covenant by the DRC

A. Effective Mechanisms for the Protection of Human Rights

9. The adequate protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms requires that every citizen has effective access to justice and legal assistance. Legal assistance can only be provided effectively in a judicial system where lawyers, along with judges and prosecutors, are able to carry out their professional activities independently. This follows from – amongst other international instruments - the ICCPR.
10. Interference in the work of lawyers may lead to violations of the right to a fair trial under Article 14 of the Covenant, as has been recognized by the Committee.⁷ In particular, the Committee has stated that *‘lawyers should be able to advise and to represent persons charged with a criminal offence in accordance with generally recognized professional ethics without restrictions, influence, pressure or undue interference from any quarter’*.⁸ Lawyers should also be able to *‘meet their clients in private and to communicate with the*

⁷ Human Rights Committee, General Comment No.32, CCPR/C/GC/32, para.34. See also Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, especially article 12.

⁸ Idem, para. 34.

accused in conditions that fully respect the confidentiality of their communications.⁹

11. The right to a fair trial also entails the principle of equality of arms. In view of the Committee, this means that *'the same procedural rights are to be provided to all the parties unless distinctions are based on law and can be justified on objective and reasonable grounds, not entailing actual disadvantage or other unfairness to the defendant'*.¹⁰
12. In its task of promoting and ensuring the proper role of lawyers, the government of DRC should respect and take into account the Basic Principles within the framework of its national legislation and practice.¹¹ Adherence to the Basic Principles is considered a fundamental pre-condition to fulfilling the requirement that all persons have effective access to independent legal assistance.¹²
13. Professional associations of lawyers also have a vital role to play in upholding professional standards and ethics and protecting their members from persecution and improper restrictions and infringements.¹³ The Bar Association of DRC should exercise its functions without external interference and cooperate with the government of the DRC to ensure – amongst others – that lawyers are able, without improper interference, to counsel and assist their clients.¹⁴
14. In its concluding observations of 26 April 2006, the Committee expressed concerns about the fact that *"many human rights defenders cannot freely carry out their work because they are subjected to harassment or intimidation, prohibition of their demonstrations or even arrest or arbitrary detention by the security forces"*¹⁵. It recommended the authorities of the DRC to *"respect and protect the activities of human rights defenders and ensure that any restriction on their activities is compatible with the provisions of articles 21 and 22 of the Covenant"*¹⁶. Furthermore, the Committee called on the authorities of the DRC to maintain and improve the training programme for judges and lawyers, including those who are already employed, about the contents of the Covenant and other international human rights instruments ratified by the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

⁹ Idem, para. 34.

¹⁰ Idem, para. 13

¹¹ Basic Principles, Preamble, paragraph 11.

¹² Basic Principles, Preamble, paragraph 9.

¹³ Basic Principles, Preamble, paragraph 10.

¹⁴ Basic Principles, Principles 24 and 25.

¹⁵ Concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee on the Democratic Republic of the Congo, CCPR/C/COD/CO/3, 26 April 2006, par. 22 and 23

¹⁶ idem

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15. In its List of Issues, the Committee asked the authorities of the DRC, in the light of the Committee's previous concluding observations, to comment on allegations of judicial persecution, threats or violations against professionals the media, human rights defenders and political opponents, and to provide information on investigations, prosecutions and sanctions imposed on those responsible for such acts.¹⁷
16. In its State report of 2 August 2016 the authorities of the DRC state that article 14 of the ICCPR is implemented in the law of the DRC, amongst others in article 19 of the Constitution.¹⁸
- i. We remark that a Draft bill for the Protection of Human rights defenders by parliament, has been prepared and was adopted by the Senate on 10 May 2017, (*Proposition de loi relative a la protection et a la responsabilité du défenseurs des droits humains*). This draft bill also concerns the protection of human rights defenders in a professional capacity (such as lawyers addressing human rights. This law is however still in a legislative proposal; not yet adopted by parliament (the Assemblée Nationale). Furthermore, the bill, once enacted, should be implemented and put in to practice.
17. Currently, however, reports gathered by L4L and information received from lawyers in the DRC show that the government of the DRC does not always uphold the necessary guarantees and human rights for the proper functioning of the legal profession in practice. Lawyers for Lawyers notes with concern that measures are not always provided to lawyers receiving threats. The protection, if offered, is not always effective and sufficient. As a consequence, lawyers encounter difficulties in carrying out their profession freely and independently, immediately impacting the rights to effective legal representation and freedom of expression as enshrined in Article 14.

B No effective guarantees for the functioning of lawyers

18. The position of lawyers in the DRC has significantly worsened over the last number of years. This coincides with a heightened level of oppression throughout the country, in particular of political opponents, and human rights defenders. L4L has been informed by lawyers in the DRC that they are regularly subjected to threats, intimidation and improper interference or attempts to put pressure on them by members of law enforcement agencies, the military and

¹⁷ Liste de points concernant le quatrième rapport périodique de la République démocratique du Congo, CCPR/C/COD/Q/4, 1^{er} mai 2017, par. 25.

¹⁸ Article 19, second and fourth paragraphs, of the Constitution states: "All persons have the right to have their case heard within a reasonable time by a competent judge. All persons have the right to defend themselves or to be assisted by counsel of their choice, at every stage in criminal proceedings, including police and pre-trial investigations."

even the judiciary. Lawyers are sometimes arbitrarily detained when exercising their professional activities. Such acts of intimidation are frequently orchestrated by members of the 'Agence Nationale de Renseignement' (ANR – or secret service), but occasionally also by magistrates, police officers, or delegates of the ruling party. In particular, lawyers who are involved in politically sensitive cases endure difficulties in carrying out their professional activities without undue intervention. This is demonstrated by the following cases:

Cases on intimidation and harassment

a) Maitre Peter Ngomo Milambo

As of 2009, Maitre Peter Ngomo represented his fellow attorney Maitre Firmin Yangambi in criminal proceedings initiated against him and two others. Yangambi was also the President of the Paix sur Terre (Peace on Earth, civil society organisation). In the course of these highly politicised proceedings, Maitre. Ngomo was subjected to acts of intimidation. In the night of 15th February 2010, Maitre Ngomo was forced to get in the car of persons who stated they were members of the 'Detection militaire des activites anti-patrie'. He was then subjected to an identity control and an involuntary body search without a clear reason being given. This happened after Maitre Ngomo had questioned the competence and ethical conduct of the representative of the Public Prosecution, and made a request not to renew his oath because of his alleged involvement in irregular and unlawful conduct. Maitre Ngomo also made submissions about false documents being produced as evidence, and that the suspects had been subjected to torture.

In the context of these same proceedings, Maitre Ngomo gave an interview to Radio Français International ('RFI') on 9 January 2013. He immediately received death threats and was told to stop exposure of the country to the RFI.

In other proceedings, that of General Kwakavu, Maitre Ngomo received threats from General Tim Mukunto Kiyani, officer of the Public Prosecution at the General Auditor and the first Attorney General of the armed forces. On 28 August 2014, General Mukunto threatened him in court, saying 'you have guts to come to the hearing'. Peter Ngomo then left the hearing and heard that he risked imminent arrest, allegedly for subornation of a witness (up to five years imprisonment according to article 129 of the penal code). Maitre Ngomo went into hiding for a while. On 4th September 2014, officers of the secret service visited Maitre Ngomo in his residence allegedly to obtain a sum of money that Maitre Ngomo owed. Maitre Ngomo was not there and his family member categorically refused to pay any money.

b) Maitre Richard Bondo, Maitre Jean-Marie Kabengela Ilunga, Maitre Elie Mbikayi Muamba and Maitre Peter Ngomo Milambo in Chebeya case

In 2014, lawyers Maitre Richard Bondo, Maitre Jean-Marie Kabengela Ilunga, Maitre Elie Mbikayi Muamba and Maitre Peter Ngomo Milambo represented the civil parties of the family members of Floribert Chebeya and Fidele Bazana, executive director and member of the Voix des Sans Voix who were killed in June 2010. Their alleged murderers were on trial. The victim lawyers received threats throughout the proceedings, which were enhanced in the period before the verdict on appeal on 17 September 2015. Throughout the proceedings there were constant remarks that the victim lawyers were fighting against the acting government and not the accused in the trial. The lawyer for the

Republic even said to the victim lawyers during a court hearing that they risked the same fate as their clients. The threats began after the victim lawyers requested the appearance in appeal of Kalala Kalao, former driver of one of the suspect murderers and a key witness in the case. They reached their peak at the end of July, beginning of August 2015, when the lawyers during their final pleas covered more grounds than those addressed in the investigation, including a reference to a massacre in 2008 of a political-religious organisation Bundu Dia Kongo, addressed by the Voix des Sans Voix and the request by Chebeya to a colleague in Belgium to file a complaint about this massacre with the International Criminal Court in The Hague ("ICC").

Apart from death threats, the lawyers Ngomo and Mbikayi received military personnel visiting their offices. When on 27th August 2015 the lawyers who were members of the collective for victim lawyers addressed a letter to the President of the bar to explain the situation, the President did not take their complaints serious.

c) Maitre Olivier Ndoole

Olivier Ndoole, lawyer of the Goma bar and an active human rights defender, was the lawyer for a civil society movement called LUCHA. In 2015, LUCHA members protested in Goma because their leader, Fred Bahuma, was arrested in Kinshasa by the secret service. The protesters were then arrested and Maitre Ndoole represented them in court. Maitre Ndoole subsequently received death threats, allegedly by the secret services. He was also attacked once, late in the evening outside of his house. He was severely beaten by three men who he believed were from the secret service ANR and ended up in hospital in Goma for 12 days and was subsequently evacuated to Nairobi.

d) David Lubugamba

On 5th September 2016 David Lubugamba was imprisoned in the central prison of Bukavu as a result of denouncing the disfunctioning of the judicial system in the South Kivu province.

Cases of arbitrary detention and intervention

e) Maitre Jacques Shesha

On 7th October 2016, police officers sent by the public prosecution office of Katanga carried out police searches, and dislodged law firms attached to the Lubumbashi bar without informing the president of the Lubumbashi bar, Jacques Shesha. Mr Shesha affirmed that searches in a law firm can only be carried out after informing the president of the bar, with the aim to protect confidential documents that are stored in the law firm. The lawyers perceived this act as an arbitrary intervention by the public prosecution office.

f) Maitre Paul Kalumire

Maitre Paul Kalumire represented the father of a kidnapped child. On 24th August 2017, he made a submission denouncing the insecurity of Goma and suggesting that the military authorities and soldiers as well as secret service agents are involved in the traffic of children and illicit exploitation of minerals. The same day, he made a similar declaration on Radio Okapi, implicating certain political-administrative members based on evidence he had gathered. That same day he received death threats by sms on his phone. On 25th August, secret service agents visited him at his firm. On 26th August, anonymous persons visited his residence. The threats continued and so he fled the DRC for Rwanda where he is currently residing.

g) Maitre Sylva Mbikayi Kabanga

A recent example of improper interference and of arbitrary detention is the arrest by the military intelligence agency of the lawyer Maitre Sylva Mbikayi Kabanga, on June 23, 2017, in Kinshasa, when he was visiting his client, Maitre Jean-Marie Kalonji, member of Voix des Sans Voix, a civil society organization frequently targeted by the DRC government. After the arrest of Maitre Jean-Marie Kalonji, the military forces did not let Maitre Mbikayi assist his client but arrested him, and confiscated the belongings and cash of both client and lawyer. The two were then taken to the military intelligence headquarters. They have been released no earlier than three weeks later, on 18 July 2017.

h) Maitre Jacques Kapanga

On 6th September 2017, Jacques Kapanga was arrested by soldiers of the republican guards ('gardes republicaines') because he had declared publicly that President Kabila's presidential term had come to an end at the end of December 2016. He made this declaration in the course of his defence of a client who was accused of contempt of the President of the State. Mr Kapanga was held in detention by the special services of the police until Monday last week, 11 September 2017.

Cases of arbitrary disciplinary proceedings

24. Governments must protect lawyers from unfair or arbitrary disciplinary proceedings.¹⁹ Disciplinary action against lawyers must be based solely upon a code of professional conduct which is consistent with recognized ethical and professional standards including the Basic Principles.
25. L4L has been informed that several lawyers in the DRC have been disbarred, or are facing disbarment or other disciplinary actions on improper grounds. This is demonstrated by the following cases:

i) Maitre Peter Ngomo Milambo (2nd example)

Maitre Ngomo is currently facing disciplinary sanctions and is ordered to appear on 23 September 2017. This involves an allegation of misconduct because the judges ordered him to be seated separately from one of his client, General Goda Sukpa, in the Ituri FNI-FRPI proceedings. In these same proceedings, he was already harassed when he gave an interview to Radio Okapi in 2016, after another of his clients from Ituri, Floribert Ndjabu, asked for recusal of the presiding judge because of an alleged conflict of interest. The military judge had been part of one of the opposing military groups in the east, a subject Mr Ngomo raised in this interview.

j) Maitre Mbuyi Mbiye

The former President of the National Bar Association Maitre Mbuyi Mbiye had a disciplinary lawsuit filed against him right after he lost the elections for the presidency of the National Bar Association. The outcome of the case was the removal of Maitre Mbuyi Mbiye from the list of attorneys, a decision that is interpreted by some lawyers as a "politically fuelled decision" of the National Bar Association because the former president

¹⁹ This follows from article 16(c) of the Basic Principles in combination with articles 26, 27, 28 and 29 thereof.

identifies himself as a member of the political opposition while the newly elected president is a member of the presidential political party.

26. Some lawyers are even criminally prosecuted in connection to their professional legitimate activities as attorneys:

k) Maitre Firmin Yangambi

Maitre Firmin Yangambi has been detained since 2009, Maitre Yangambi is lawyer and member of the Conseil de l'Ordre du Barreau de Kisangani and in addition he is president of the foundation "Paix sur Terre" an organisation for the victims of war. He is convicted by the High Military Court of la Gombe to imprisonment for 20 years, for causing uprisings and the possession of illegal arms. However, from several reports it can be derived that his conviction is a consequence of him opposing the government and his presidency of Paix sur Terre. The case was brought to the Supreme Court, which has never issued a judgement.

l) Maître Jean Paul Lumbulumbu Mutanava

Jean Paul Lumbulumbu Mutanava, lawyer of Goma, member of the DRC bar at the level of the Courts of Appeal, states he was threatened by certain magistrates in Goma. On 23rd August 2017, he was a lawyer representing the civil party (victims) in a case involving the kidnapping of three minors in Goma. During more than six months, many children were kidnapped in Goma. The tribunal found the perpetrators of these kidnappings guilty, convicted them, and sentenced them to 20 years of imprisonment. In his declaration to the media (Radio Okapi), Mr. Mutanava congratulated the civil justice system for this exemplary judgment and encouraged the military courts to follow this example in cases involving soldiers who are involved in killing civilians in Goma with impunity. On 26 August 2017 he had to appear before the military judicial authorities (Auditeur militaire superieur and the first President of the military court of Goma, the highest military magistrates of the province). He was called in their office and received a warning. On 31 August a complaint was filed against him with the President of the bar of Goma, cc'ed to the Public Prosecutor and the First President of the Court of Appeals (the highest civil magistrates in the province). The Public Prosecution of Goma opened a case against him pursuant to R.I. 134/PG/EKI and he was ordered to appear in the beginning of September. He has been accused of citing the name of the auditeur superieur in his declaration of 23 August 2017, which he denies. Yet, he is being accused of destabilising the institutions and the rumors are that he will be arrested soon.

27. In Recommendation 13 of the last cycle in 2006, the Committee recommended that the State party should abolish military courts for ordinary offences. The Constitution does not allow the application of justice by military courts to civilians, apart from certain exceptions.²⁰ Military courts in the DRC are over-utilised in civilian cases. However, lawyers are still subject to prosecution before military courts in the DRC. The conviction of Me Firmin Yangambi is only one example, this practice still continues today.

²⁰ See article 39,40, article 111 -112, 115, of the military penal code.

Freedom of expression of lawyers

28. Lawyers, like any other individuals, have the right to freedom of expression. This right is guaranteed under article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The freedom of expression that lawyers enjoy in connection to their professional functions should not only be guaranteed in light of the rights of the lawyer, but also in protection of the rights of their clients. The lawyer should be enabled to effectively protect the rights and interests of his or her client.
29. As this Committee stated in General Comment No.34 on Article 19: “*States Parties should put in place effective measures to protect against attacks aimed at silencing those exercising their right to freedom of expression. [...] Journalists are frequently subjected to such threats, intimidation and attacks because of their activities. So too are persons who engage in the gathering and analysis of information on the human rights situation and who publish human rights-related reports, including [...] lawyers*”.²¹
30. The detention of lawyer David Lubugamba (see above) and the disbarment proceedings against Peter Ngomo therefore could constitute a violation of Article 19 of the Covenant.

Bar Association of the DRC

31. Professional associations of lawyers have a vital role to play in upholding professional standards and ethics and protecting their members from persecution and improper restrictions and infringements.²² The Bar Association of the DRC should exercise its functions without external interference and cooperate with the government of DRC to ensure – amongst others – that lawyers are able, without improper interference, to counsel and assist their clients.²³
32. The several Congolese Bar associations throughout the country are not always in a position to provide adequate protection. While by law the Congolese Bar associations are independent bodies with an independent legal personality,²⁴ in reality this independent status is questionable.

²¹ Human Rights Committee General comment No. 34 Article 19: Freedoms of opinion and expression, 102nd session Geneva, 11-29 July 2011, CCPR/C/GC/34, available on: <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrc/docs/gc34.pdf>.

²² Basic Principles, Preamble, paragraph 10.

²³ Basic Principles, Principles 24 and 25.

²⁴ Law No. 79 of 28 September 1979, articles 2-4. (Ordonnance Loi du 28 September 1979).

IV Concluding recommendations

Lawyers for lawyers proposes the following recommendations:

- I. **The DRC should take measures to prevent the harassment of lawyers and attempts to impede or interfere on improper grounds with their defence of clients, in accordance with Article 14 of the Covenant and articles 16 and 18 of the Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers.**
- II. **The DRC should take all necessary measures to prevent that lawyers suffer or be threatened with prosecution, disciplinary action or other sanctions on improper grounds, in accordance with article 14 of the Covenant and article 16 of the Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers.**
- III. **The DRC should take measures to guarantee the effective protection of the right of freedom of expression of lawyers as set out in article 19 of the ICCPR and Basic Principle 23, in particular their right to take part in public discussion of matters concerning the law, the administration of justice and the promotion and protection of human rights, without suffering professional restrictions by reason of their lawful action.**
- IV. **The DRC should strengthen the role and organisation of the bar associations in the DRC and to acknowledge and promote their independence of the state and the courts and the vital role they play for the administration of justice. We recommend that the DRC establishes well-organised bar associations in all districts and strengthens the capacities of the “Barreaux” and maintains and improves the training programme for lawyers as far as it concerns the knowledge and application of international treaties, the Covenant, the functioning of international institutions such as the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights and the role of lawyers.**
- V. **Adoption of the Draft bill for the Protection of Human rights defenders by parliament, as was adopted by the Senate on 10 May 2017, (*Proposition de loi relative a la protection et a la responsabilité du defenseurs des droits humains*) by parliament (by the Assemblée Nationale) and an immediate and fast implementation of this Act, notably the measures to be taken as stated in articles 18 until 21 of this Act, concerning the obligation of the State to take measures for the protection of human rights defenders and to prosecute any offenders of threats to human rights defenders.**