

## Detained Congolese journalist Bujakera has been freed, lawyer says

Stanis Bujakera, a journalist detained since last September in the Democratic Republic of Congo on charges of spreading false information, was released on Tuesday, his lawyer said.

By [Bate Felix](#) 20 Mar 2024



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The lawyer, Yana Ndikulu, said Bujakera - who works for international media including *Reuters* and *Jeune Afrique* - was released on Tuesday evening from the prison in the capital Kinshasa where he was being held.

"Our client is free," Ndikulu said.

Bujakera told Reuters the director of the prison had told him he was free to leave shortly after 21:30 local time (2030GMT).

A court in the capital Kinshasa on Monday had found Bujakera guilty of spreading false information among other charges.

It sentenced him to six months in prison and fined him 1 million Congolese francs (\$364). His legal team said after that ruling that Bujakera would be released on Tuesday because he had already served his sentence.



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But the release was unexpectedly suspended after news emerged on Tuesday evening that the state prosecutor in the case had lodged an appeal against the sentence. About three hours later however, Bujakera's lawyers said the prosecutor had withdrawn his appeal, paving the way for his release.

"From what we understand, the prosecutor eventually withdrew the appeal, which allowed this late release, Ndikulu told Reuters.

Contacted by Reuters after the release, the prosecutor said he could not comment further at this stage.

Bujakera was arrested in September on suspicion of spreading false information about the killing of a prominent opposition politician in an article published by Jeune Afrique, the French news magazine has said.

The prosecutor in the case earlier this month had asked the court in Kinshasa to sentence Bujakera to 20 years in prison.

Local and international rights groups including Reporters Without Borders and Amnesty International had condemned Bujakera's detention, calling it an attack on press freedom. Reuters has also called for his release.

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