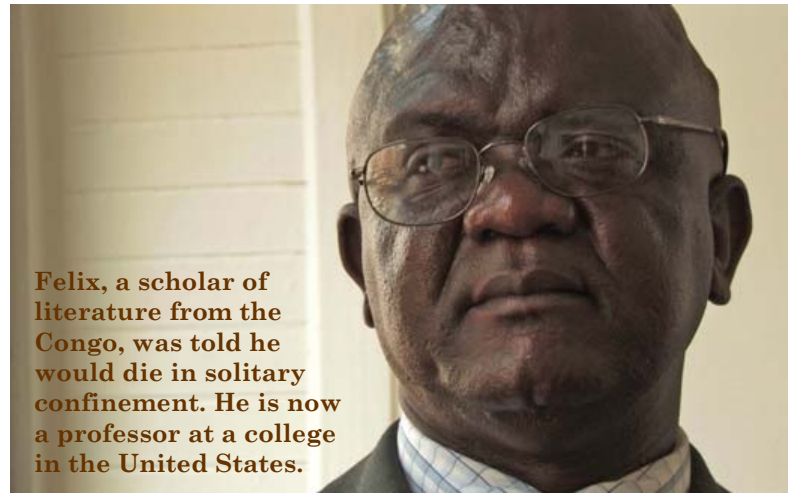




SCHOLARS AT RISK NETWORK

Scholars at Risk is an international network of universities, colleges and individuals committed to protecting scholars and promoting academic freedom worldwide. For over ten years Scholars at Risk members have been saving lives by providing sanctuary to professors, researchers, lecturers, writers and other intellectuals who suffer threats and violence in their home country. For information on joining the network or to make a gift in support of an at-risk scholar visit www.scholarsatrisk.org.



Felix, a scholar of literature from the Congo, was told he would die in solitary confinement. He is now a professor at a college in the United States.

Felix Kaputu

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in a small, dark cell filled with the putrefying smell of the dead, Professor Felix Kaputu listened to the screams of his fellow inmates as they were tortured. Held incommunicado in solitary confinement, Felix was denied food, water and access to a bathroom. He was kept company by rats. He was threatened by prison guards at gun point. And he was told he would die.

Felix had been falsely accused of participating in an alleged separatist group intent on seceding from Congo and declaring independence. A scholar of comparative literature with a PhD specializing in gender issues, religion, and university pedagogy, Felix denies all charges and any interest or involvement in politics.

“The Director of Prisons told me that I was no longer a professor. He told me to forget my name.

He said that when I die, they would just throw me away.”

-Felix Kaputu

After an international letter-writing campaign successfully secured his release, Felix returned to his university and rededicated himself to his passion—teaching. But he soon realized that his life as a professor in his former hometown was over; made impossible by the constant presence of security agents and the spread of malicious rumors among his students. These turned to threats which intensified, forcing him to stop working altogether. To save his life, Felix was forced to flee in 2006, leaving behind his students, his profession, the country he loved so much, even his wife and three daughters.

Scholars at Risk helped Felix restart his life, with academic positions network-members Harvard University, Purchase College–SUNY, and the International Christian University in Tokyo, Japan. Felix now holds a multi-year visiting professor position at Massachusetts College of Art and Design, and is hoping to be reunited with his wife and daughters soon.

This past year, Felix taught courses on African Literature, Art, Religion, Culture and Politics. He recently published a novel, and has shared his extraordinary journey with audiences in the US and Europe. In Spring 2010 he took part in a SAR Speaker Series visit to Rollins College, receiving praise from faculty and students for his engaging teaching style and extensive knowledge of topics ranging from academic freedom to innovative pedagogy. He has given interviews to a number of print publications and was recently featured on Boston-area television, sharing his personal experiences in the Congo and his journey to the US with viewers. Felix is one of the many extraordinary at-risk scholars who refuse to be silenced. Their courage, perseverance and dedication to knowledge and truth inspire us in our lives and motivate us in this important work.