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<http://www.rsf.org/burundi-national-assembly-passes-new-media-10-03-2015,47670.html>

Africa - Burundi

Media law replaced

National Assembly passes new media law

10 March 2015

Reporters Without Borders joins the Union of Burundian Journalists (UBJ) in welcoming the new media law that the National Assembly adopted unanimously on 4 March.

It replaces a June 2013 media law of which several controversial clauses were quashed by the Constitutional Court in January 2014 in response to a petition by the UBJ.

Problematic provisions concerning the confidentiality of journalists' sources, the National Council for Communication and heavy fines for media offences have been modified in the new law.

"We join the UBJ in hailing the National Assembly's unanimous adoption of the new media law," said Cléa Kahn-Sriber, the head of the Reporters Without Borders Africa desk. "This is a great victory for media freedom in Burundi. We hope the next step towards media freedom and independence will be the law's promulgation and ratification, and the decriminalization of media offences in the near future."

Telecommunications, information and communication minister Tharcisse Nkezabahizi issued a statement saying the government had agreed to amend the media law in order to strengthen journalism. The new law has to be approved by the senate before it can be promulgated.

The UBJ also petitioned the East African Community Court of Justice in July 2013, asking it to overturn the media law on the grounds that it violated the East African Community's founding treaty. Reporters Without Borders and eight other NGOs submitted an amicus brief in support of the petition.

Burundi is ranked 145th out of 180 countries in the 2015 [Reporters Without Borders press freedom index](#).

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