

# Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/burundi-call-for-the-release-of-jean-29-12-2010,39190.html>

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Africa - Burundi

A disgrace!

## Prosecutor requests life imprisonment for online newspaper editor

13 April 2011

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Reporters Without Borders is deeply shocked to learn that deputy prosecutor Marc Ndabakeshimana today asked a Bujumbura court to sentence detained journalist **Jean-Claude Kavumbagu** to life imprisonment on charges of treason and defamation. The court has 60 days to render its verdict.

The editor of the online newspaper *Net Press*, Kavumbagu has been held since 17 July 2010 because of an article about a terrorist bombing in the Ugandan capital of Kampala with a toll of 76 dead, in which he questioned whether the Burundian armed forces would be able to deal with a similar threat in Burundi.

"We fail to understand why the Burundian authorities persist in persecuting this journalist," Reporters Without Borders said. "He just criticized the Burundian army's capacities. He just voiced an opinion. As his lawyer, Gabriel Sinarinzi, keeps repeating, there is no basis for the treason charge as it is only applicable in time of war, and Burundi is not at war."

The press freedom organisation added: "There are absolutely no grounds for detaining Kavumbagu and still less for jailing him for the rest of his life. The sentence requested by the prosecutor is a disgrace. We call for his immediate release."

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### **29.12.2011 - Call for the release of Jean-Claude Kavumbagu after nearly six months in custody**

Reporters Without Borders today called on the authorities in Burundi to release journalist **Jean-Claude Kavumbagu**, who has been held in custody for nearly six months at Mpimba prison in the capital Bujumbura. No trial has yet been opened in the case.

"Jean-Claude Kavumbagu should be released immediately. He was arrested last July and is about to begin the year 2011 behind bars without ever being put on trial. Pre-trial detention should remain an exceptional measure", the worldwide press freedom organisation said.

Kavumbagu, held in jail since 17 July, the editor of online publication *Net Press*, was accused of "treason" for posting an article the day after a double bombing in the Ugandan capital, Kampala left 76 dead, which was headlined "Will Burundi be the next target of the Somali al-Shabaab (Islamist militia)?"

"The accusation of treason against him is absurd, not only because Burundi is not at war but also because all the article did was to reflect on the capacity of Burundi's army forces to react to a genuine threat", said Reporters Without Borders' Secretary General Jean-François Julliard.

The al-Shabaab Islamist group has just announced that new attacks would be launched against Burundi and Uganda, the two countries providing the lion's share of the African Union Mission in



Somalia (AMISOM) deployed in Mogadishu to support the government. The Somali Islamists have also threatened to attack the United States.

[For more information about Jean-Claude Kavumbagu.](#)

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