

# Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/burundi-four-days-to-start-of-appeal-for-04-10-2012,43485.html>

Africa - Burundi

"Not a terrorist"

## Four days to start of appeal for reporter who spoke to rebels

4 October 2012

On 8 October, a court in the central city of Gitega is to begin hearing radio journalist **Hassan Ruvakuki's** appeal against his conviction on a charge of "participating in a terrorist act," for which he received a life sentence last June. Reporters Without Borders will send a representative to Gitega to attend the hearings and has learned that several foreign diplomats based in the capital, Bujumbura, also plan to travel to Gitega for the same purpose.

"We are pleased that the international community has finally decided to follow this case closely," Reporters Without Borders said. "This show of interest has been slow in coming and it is now high time to provide clear support for this journalist, whose innocence must be recognized."

A reporter for *Bonesha FM* and *Radio France Internationale's* Swahili service, Ruvakuki has been jailed since December 2011 – more than 10 months.

"Ruvakuki is a journalist who was just doing his job when he was arrested," Reporters Without Borders added. "His lawyers, Onésime Kabayabaya and Fabien Segatwa, have to show that he did not get a fair trial and that covering a rebel movement is not the same as participating in it. These appeal proceedings will be a real test of media freedom in Burundi."

Two representatives of Audiovisuel Extérieur de la France (AEF), the French foreign broadcasting agency, have just visited Bujumbura for a series of meetings with the Burundian authorities about the case. One of them visited Ruvakuki in the prison where he is being held in Muramvya, a central province adjoining Gitega province.

In a letter written in his prison cell, a copy of which has been obtained by Reporters Without Borders, Ruvakuki says:

"By going to Tanzania, to a Burundian rebel camp, I was just doing my job as a journalist. It was the first time I had gone to Tanzania and I have never belonged to any political party, let alone an armed movement. Like any journalist anywhere in the world, I just went to verify, on the ground, the truth of some information which I was the first to know (...) Now I would just like to cry out to the world that I am innocent (...) Again, I am innocent and I have faith in the justice system."

[More information](#) about this case.

HASSAN RUVAKUKI  
Prison de MURAMVYA  
BURUNDI

MA VERITE

Je suis LA VERITE, pour vous dire  
le vrai.

J'écris cette lettre par ce que  
ce qui s'est exactement passé en 6 mois de ma vie  
pour vous dire que contrairement à ce dont on m'accuse,  
je ne suis pas un terroriste.  
En allant en Tanzanie, dans un camp de rebelles burundais  
je n'ai fait que mon métier: celui de journaliste, et c'est  
la première fois que j'allais en Tanzanie.  
Je n'ai jamais appartenu à un quelconque parti politique,  
ni lors de mon mouvement armé.  
Comme tous mes confrères de la planète, je suis  
allié vérité, sur le terrain, la vérité d'une  
information dont j'avais le premier.  
Voici, pour établir la vérité sur ce qui s'est passé,  
la chronologie des faits:

Après tout, cela fait 10 mois que je traîne en prison,  
et je veux d'être condamné à une peine de prison à  
perpetuité prononcée en première instance par le  
tribunal de grande instance de CANKARA.  
J'ai décidé de faire appel. Avec mes avocats, je veux  
vivre à la face du monde que je suis innocent, que  
ma place n'est pas en prison, mais aux côtés de  
mon épouse et de ma petite fille de sept mois (que  
je n'ai pas vu maître), parmi mes confrères.  
Je voudrais ici, remercier du fond du cœur, tous  
ces amis et celles qui m'ont soutenus que la soit  
au Burundi ou à l'étranger, et je les appelle  
à persévérer car, une nouvelle fois, je suis  
innocent, et j'ai foi en la justice!

Muramuna, le 02/10/2012

HASSAN RUVAKUKI

Hass. R.  


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