

# Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/burundi-new-law-s-promulgation-sets-04-06-2013,44574.html>

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Africa - Burundi

Partial invalidation

## Constitutional court quashes some articles, but not enough

8 January 2014

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In response to a petition from the Union of Burundian Journalists (UBJ), the Constitutional Court has quashed certain provisions of the media law that was promulgated on 4 June 2013.

The court's ruling, issued on 7 January, invalidated articles providing for huge increases in fines and other penalties that could be imposed on journalists in an arbitrary manner.

"While we obviously approve the suppression of these articles, we deplore the fact that other draconian provisions are still in effect, namely, those that force journalists to reveal their sources, restrict their investigative ability and reinforce the punitive powers of the National Communication Council (CNC)," Reporters Without Borders said.

The Union of Burundian Journalists has also petitioned the East African Community's Court of Justice, based in the Tanzanian city of Arusha.

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### 04.06.2013 - New law's promulgation sets Burundi back 20 years

"This is a black day for freedom of information in Burundi," Reporters Without Borders said after President Pierre Nkurunziza today promulgated the media law that parliament passed in April. "The country has gone backwards more than 20 years."

Reporters Without Borders campaigned for months against the law's adoption by parliament and then against its promulgation by the president.

The new law restricts journalists' ability to do investigative reporting, weakens protection for sources, increases fines and requires all journalists to have a university degree regardless of their work experience. For more information about the new law, click [here](#).

More information about media freedom in Burundi:

- [Press releases](#)
  - [RWB country file](#)
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### 07.05.2013 - Media law's threat to freedom of information

Reporters Without Borders wrote an open letter to President Pierre Nkurunziza today voicing concern about freedom of information in Burundi and asking him not to promulgate a media law that has been passed by the country's parliament.

The text of the letter follows:

Dear President Nkurunziza,

In the wake of World Press Freedom Day just three days ago, Reporters Without Borders urges not to promulgate the media law that parliament passed last month.

Approved by the national assembly at the start of April and by the senate on 19 April, the proposed law is very controversial and comes at a difficult time for the Burundian media, a time exacerbated by **Hassan Ruvakuki's** long detention and several serious physical attacks on journalists.

You should not interpret the many objections that have been voiced by the media and international bodies as a sign of hostility towards your government's actions in general. They

just reflect a legitimate concern.

By restricting your subjects' accessibility to journalists and by drastically increasing the jail terms and fines for media offences, the proposed law would considerably limit investigative reporting and would probably increase self-censorship.

With two years to go until the next national elections, its promulgation would have disastrous consequences for pluralism, transparency and democracy in general in Burundi.

In this grave and decisive period, we therefore count on your goodwill.

By preventing this law from taking effect, you will demonstrate your commitment to freedom of information. But if you promulgate it, you will send an extremely negative signal to your fellow citizens, the international community and all of Burundi's partners.

Our organization is convinced that you will display the required vision and allow the media to fully play their proper role, one that is so necessary for the vitality of democracies.

I thank you in advance for the attention you give to our request.

Sincerely,

Christophe Deloire Reporters Without Borders secretary-general

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