

# Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/burundi-intelligence-agency-arrests-radio-29-11-2011,41481.html>

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Africa - Burundi

Abduction-style arrest

## Intelligence agency arrests radio reporter for allegedly helping rebels

29 November 2011

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Reporters Without Borders is shocked by radio reporter **Hassan Ruvakuki's** abduction-style arrest yesterday by the National Intelligence Service (SNR), which is still holding him but refuses to reveal his whereabouts. Employed by radio *Bonesha FM* and *Radio France Internationale's* Swahili service, he is accused of collaborating with a rebel group.

"We are outraged by the manner of this arrest, which is meant to intimidate reporters and the media in general," Reporters Without Borders said. "After repeated harassment of the privately-owned media, a journalist has now been arrested without a warrant. We are very worried about Ruvakuki as there has been no news of him since his arrest. What evidence is there to support the claim that he was supporting a rebellion? How is he being treated? We urge the authorities to free him at once."

SNR spokesperson Téléphore Bigirimana told Reporters Without Borders: "He has been arrested along with other people, not as a journalist but as an individual, for the purposes of investigation. He is suspected of helping a rebel group. If he is innocent, I am sure he will be released quickly."

Ruvakuki was arrested by police and SNR officials at around 5 p.m. yesterday while covering an international conference on the protection and management of Lake Tanganyika and was taken to an unknown location. Intelligence officers also searched his home and reportedly took away documents belonging to him.

According to initial reports, his arrest may have been prompted by *Bonesha FM's* broadcasting of an interview with a Burundian citizen who identified himself as the commander of new rebel group in the east of the country, the FRD-Abanyagihugu

Two Burundian intelligence officials had threatened *Bonesha FM's* management with the use of force on 25 November if Ruvakuki did not cooperate with the intelligence services and provide them with information about this new rebel group.

The National Council for Communication (CNC) has meanwhile announced that the media are banned from broadcasting or publishing any information about the new rebel group or commenting on its existence. Innocent Muhozi, the head of the Burundian Media Monitoring Centre, condemned the ban as "illegal."

Amnesty International criticized the behaviour of the SNR in an August 2010 [report entitled "A step backwards – torture and other ill-treatment by Burundi's National Intelligence Service."](#)

Photo : logo of the new rebel movement called FRD-ABANYAGIHUGU.

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