

# Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/rwanda-prosecutors-request-10-year-jail-29-04-2011,40180.html>

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Africa - Rwanda

Persecution

## Prosecutors request 10-year jail sentence for exiled newspaper editor

29 April 2011

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Reporters Without Borders is appalled by the Rwandan government's determination to keep hounding one of its media bugbears, **Jean Bosco Gasasira**, editor of the bimonthly newspaper *Umuvugizi* and one of the country's most outspoken journalists.

Prosecutors yesterday asked Rwanda's supreme court to sentence him to ten years in prison on charges on which the Kigali high court acquitted him last September. The request was made at a hearing at which he was not represented by a lawyer. Gasasira himself fled the country months ago.

Gasasira is charged with spreading rumours that incited civil disobedience, insulting the president and deliberately violating Rwanda's media law. The supreme court, whose decisions cannot be appealed, is due to announce its verdict on 27 May.

Acting on orders from the most senior government officials, Rwanda's prosecutors are clearly bent on convicting Gasasira at all costs. The aim for President Paul Kagame's government is to smear his reputation and make it impossible for him to return. Reporters Without Borders urges the supreme court to follow the high court's example and dismiss the charges.

Gasasira has been in the government's sights for years and has often been harassed and prosecuted. *Umuvugizi* was [suspended for six months on 13 April 2010](#). As tension mounted in the run-up to the August 2010 presidential election, Gasasira went into exile in order to continue working, and launched an online version of the newspaper.

He continued to upset the government with the articles he posted online and, on 3 June 2010, the Media High Council set a disturbing precedent for the flow of online information in Rwanda by giving orders [to block \*Umuvugizi's\* website](#).

[Two women journalists are currently detained in Rwanda](#). They are **Agnès Uwimana Nkusi**, the editor of the privately-owned bimonthly *Umurabyo*, who was sentenced on 4 February to 17 years in prison, and **Saidath Mukakibibi**, one of her reporters, who was sentenced to seven years in prison in the same case.

Reporters Without Borders calls for their immediate and unconditional release.

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