



AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC STATEMENT

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Burundi: Government must uphold its human rights obligations, curb widespread impunity

Amnesty International welcomes the Special Rapporteur's update on the human rights situation in Burundi.

Burundi continues to face serious human rights challenges despite promises by Burundian authorities to improve the human rights situation since President Evariste Ndayishimiye took over as head of state in June 2020. Despite these significant challenges, Burundian officials continue to reject cooperation with mandates established by this Council, including your mandate.

Freedom of expression, association, and peaceful assembly continue to be restricted in Burundi. In March, law enforcement interrupted a press conference organized to challenge the government to reconsider its decision to limit access to motorcycles, bicycles, and tricycles in the center of Bujumbura.

Lawyer, Tony Germain Nkina is serving a 5-year sentence after the Ngozi Appeal Court upheld his conviction and sentence in September 2021. He had been arrested in October 2020 while working in a commune affected by armed attacks and was accused of "collaboration with rebels who attacked Burundi." The evidence against him suggests that the case was motivated by his prior human rights activities.

As Burundi re-establishes relationships with its bilateral and multilateral partners, it is crucial to emphasize the need for the government of Burundi to uphold its human rights obligations. The government must release those detained for peacefully exercising their human rights and fundamental freedoms, including Tony Germain Nkina. It must more generally promote and protect civic space and allow operations of civil society organizations and human rights activists without fear of reprisals.

Burundi should seize this important opportunity and genuinely engage with the Special Rapporteur to rebuild trust and confidence in its promises to improve the human rights situation.

In light of the gravity of the human rights situation in Burundi, we encourage this Council to pay continued attention to the country in order to support a meaningful progress.

Background

This public statement is based on an oral statement Amnesty International delivered to the Human Rights Council on 29 June 2022, during the interactive dialogue with the UN Special Rapporteur on Burundi.

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