

# URGENT ACTION

## JOURNALIST MISSING FOR MORE THAN SIX MONTHS

**Journalist John Ndabarasa was last seen in Kigali on 7 August 2016. More than six months later, there is no news on his whereabouts or on the progress of the police investigation into his disappearance.**

**John Ndabarasa**, a journalist and award-winning singer, was last seen in Kicukiro, Kigali on 7 August 2016. A friend reported that John Ndabarasa had sent him a text message around the time of his disappearance saying that he was going to Uganda. His family does not believe that he left the country.

After John Ndabarasa's disappearance was reported to police by the Rwanda Media Commission, on 30 August 2016 the police announced through the media that they were opening an investigation. To date, more than six months since John Ndabarasa disappeared, the Rwandan authorities have not given any information on the progress of their investigations despite requests from Amnesty International and other human rights organizations.

It is not clear whether the disappearance is related to John Ndabarasa's work as a journalist or his family connections to Joel Mutabazi, his brother-in-law. Joel Mutabazi is President Kagame's former bodyguard and is serving a life sentence for treason after having been forcibly returned from Uganda where he had refugee status.

The European Parliament raised concerns about John Ndabarasa's case in its resolution of 6 October 2016.

### **Please write immediately in English or your own language:**

- Urging Rwandan authorities to immediately provide information on the progress of the police investigation into John Ndabarasa's disappearance and continue to provide timely updates on the same;
- Calling on them, if he is in their detention, to immediately release John Ndabarasa, unless he is promptly charged with a recognizable offence in line with international law and standards;
- Urging them, if he is in their detention, to ensure that John Ndabarasa is treated humanely, allowed regular access to his family, a lawyer of his own choosing and adequate medical care.

### **PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 31 MARCH 2017 TO:**

Minister of Justice and Attorney General

Minister Johnston Busingye  
Ministry of Justice  
P.O. Box 160  
Kigali  
Rwanda  
Fax: +250 252 586509  
Email: [mjust@minijust.gov.rw](mailto:mjust@minijust.gov.rw)  
**Salutation: Dear Minister**

Inspector General of Police

Commissioner General Emmanuel K.  
Gasana  
Rwanda National Police  
P.O. Box 6304  
Kigali  
Rwanda  
Email: [info@police.gov.rw](mailto:info@police.gov.rw)  
**Salutation: Dear Commissioner General**

**And copies to:**

Chairperson, National Commission for Human Rights  
Mrs Madeleine Nirere  
National Commission for Human Rights  
PO Box 269  
Kigali  
Rwanda  
Email: [cndh@rwanda1.rw](mailto:cndh@rwanda1.rw)

**Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.** HIS EXCELLENCY MR WILLIAMS NKURUNIZA, Embassy of Rwanda, 120 – 122 Seymour Place, London, W1H 1NR, (0044) 0207 224 9832, Fax (0044) 0207 724 8642, [uk@ambarwanda.org.uk](mailto:uk@ambarwanda.org.uk)

**Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.**

**AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL**



# URGENT ACTION

## JOURNALIST MISSING FOR MORE THAN SIX MONTHS

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

John Ndararasa was working as a journalist for the Kigali-based radio station Sana FM at the time of his disappearance. He is also a singer and composer of traditional Rwandan music. In 2014, he was named Traditional Artist of the Year by the Groove Awards.

John Ndararasa's sister is married to Joel Mutabazi, President Kagame's former bodyguard. For several months in 2010 and 2011, Joel Mutabazi was detained incommunicado by Rwanda's Department of Military Intelligence at Camp Kami, where he was tortured. He fled to Uganda and was granted refugee status. He was handed over by Ugandan police to Rwandan authorities in October 2013 and forcibly returned to Rwanda. Joel Mutabazi was later convicted of treason in a proceeding that did not comply with international fair trial standards and is now serving a life sentence.

Despite some reforms to restrictive legislation such as the law on genocide ideology and the media laws, freedom of expression remains highly restricted in Rwanda. The fear of prosecution or other reprisals has had a chilling effect and led to self-censorship by the media.

John Ndararasa's disappearance is one of a number of unresolved cases in recent years. Family members are often afraid to speak out for fear of reprisals. The government has committed to set up a desk under the Rwanda National Police to investigate cases of enforced disappearances, but no information is available on its status.

UA: 49/17 Index: AFR 47/5747/2017 Issue Date: 24 February 2017