

URGENT ACTION

MEMBERS OF NGO WRONGLY ACCUSED, FACING TRIAL
Emmanuel Nshimirimana, Aimé Constant Gatore and Marius Nizigiyimana are on trial for “threatening state security” and using fake documents. A verdict is expected on 26 February. They are members of the Burundian non-governmental organization Words and Actions for the Awakening of Consciences and the Evolution of Mentalities (PARCEM). Amnesty International considers them to be prisoners of conscience.

Emmanuel Nshimirimana, PARCEM's provincial representative in Muramvya, Aimé Constant Gatore and Marius Nizigiyimana, local focal points for PARCEM in the same province, were arrested in June 2017. They are being prosecuted on charges of “threatening state security” and for allegedly using fake documents. Their trial opened on 1 December 2017 and a verdict is now expected on 26 February 2018. The prosecution has requested sentences of between 20 and 25 years in prison, and a fine of 1 million FBU (1175 USD) for each of the accused.

They are accused of recruiting youth members of opposition parties as whistle-blowers to report on human rights violations while excluding members of the Imbonerakure, the youth wing of the ruling party, National Council for the Defense of Democracy - Forces for the Defense of Democracy (CNDD-FDD). PARCEM has said that their members were identifying these young people as part of preparations for a workshop which would bring together youth from different political parties, including representatives from the ruling party.

Amnesty International considers Emmanuel Nshimirimana, Aimé Constant Gatore and Marius Nizigiyimana to be prisoners of conscience who have been imprisoned solely for the peaceful exercise of their human rights.

Please write immediately in French, English or your own language:

- Urging the authorities to drop all charges against Emmanuel Nshimirimana, Aimé Constant Gatore and Marius Nizigiyimana and release them immediately and unconditionally;
- Calling on them to ensure that they have access to their family and lawyer of their choice, pending their release;
- Urging them to ensure that they are protected from torture or other ill-treatment while detained;
- Urging the authorities to stop harassing human rights defenders and to publicly recognize the legitimacy of their activities.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 27 MARCH 2018 TO:

Minister of Justice

Aimée Laurentine Kanyana
 Ministry of Justice
 BP 1305
 Bujumbura, Burundi
Salutation: Dear Minister

Prosecutor General of the Republic

Sylvestre Nyandwi
 Parquet General
 BP 105Bujumbura, Burundi
 Email: sylnyandwi@yahoo.fr
Salutation: Dear Prosecutor General

And copies to:

Minister of Human Rights, Social Affairs
 and Gender
 Martin Nivyabandi
 Ministry of Human Rights, Social Affairs
 and Gender,
 Ex-Building of Finances,
 Bujumbura, Burundi
 Email: mnivyabandi@yahoo.com

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. HIS EXCELLENCY MR ERNEST NDABASHINZE, Embassy of the Republic of Burundi, Uganda House Second Floor 58-59 Trafalgar Square WC2N 5DX, 020 7930 4958, Fax 020 7930 4957, www.burundiembassy.org.uk

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

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 INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Since the start of the political crisis in April 2015 when President Pierre Nkurunziza announced his decision to stand for a third term in office that sparked widespread demonstrations, the Burundian authorities have engaged in an extensive clampdown on independent civil society and media. Many human rights defenders have fled the country for their safety and many others are being unjustly prosecuted simply for their human rights work.

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