

# URGENT ACTION

## HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS SENTENCED TO 10 YEARS

Human rights defenders Emmanuel Nshimirimana, Aimé Constant Gatore and Marius Nizigiyimana were sentenced to 10 years in prison on 8 March. They are members of the Burundian non-governmental organization Words and Actions for the Awakening of Consciences and the Evolution of Mentalities (PARCEM). They had been charged with ‘threatening interior state security’ and using fake documents. Amnesty International considers them to be prisoners of conscience.

A court in Burundi sentenced human rights defenders Emmanuel Nshimirimana, Aimé Constant Gatore and Marius Nizigiyimana to 10 years in prison on 8 March. Their sentence was announced in the absence of their lawyers or their organization. Their lawyers have since appealed the judgement.

The three were convicted on the charge of ‘threatening interior state security’ and acquitted of the charge of using fake documents. They had been accused of recruiting youth members of opposition parties as whistle-blowers to report on human rights violations, but not including members of the Imbonerakure, who would have spoken favourably of the government. The Imbonerakure is the youth wing of the ruling party. However, the three human rights defenders say they were only contacting the youth as part of preparations for a workshop to be organised by PARCEM bringing together youth from different political parties, including representatives of the ruling party.

Emmanuel Nshimirimana, PARCEM’s provincial representative in Muramvya was arrested on 17 June 2017. Aimé Constant Gatore and Marius Nizigiyimana, local focal points for PARCEM in Muyinga were arrested on 13 June 2017. Their trial began on 1 December 2018.

Amnesty International considers Emmanuel Nshimirimana, Aimé Constant Gatore and Marius Nizigiyimana to be prisoners of conscience as they have been convicted solely for their human rights work.

### Please write immediately in French or your own language:

- Urging the authorities to release Emmanuel Nshimirimana, Aimé Constant Gatore and Marius Nizigiyimana immediately and unconditionally and to ensure that their convictions are quashed;
- Calling on them to ensure that, until they are released, they have regular access to their family and lawyers of their choice;
- Calling on them to ensure that, pending their release, they are protected from torture and other ill-treatment while in detention;
- Urging them to stop the intimidation and harassment of human rights defenders.

### PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 11 JUNE 2018 TO:

#### Minister of Justice

Aimée Laurentine Kanyana  
Ministry of Justice  
BP 1305  
Bujumbura, Burundi  
Twitter: @AimeeLaurentine  
**Salutation: Dear Minister**

#### Prosecutor General of the Republic

Sylvestre Nyandwi  
Parquet General  
BP 105  
Bujumbura, 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-Buildings of Finances  
Bujumbura, Burundi  
Twitter: @mmnivyabandi  
Email: solidaritegenre@yahoo.fr

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. This is the first update of UA 31/18. Further information: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr16/7871/2018/en/>

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### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Since the start of the political crisis in April 2015, Burundian authorities have engaged in an extensive clampdown on the opposition members, independent human rights organizations and media. Many activists fled the country for their safety and many are being prosecuted unjustly for their human rights work in Burundi.

PARCEM is one of the very few human rights organization that continues to openly work in a hostile environment in Burundi.

Further information on UA: 31/18 Index: AFR 16/8293/2018 Issue Date: 30 April 2018