

PUBLIC

AI Index: AFR 47/001/2006

20 January 2006

UA 16/06

Intimidation/fear for safety

RWANDA

Bonaventure Bizumuremyi (m), journalist

Four men forced their way into the house of newspaper editor Bonaventure Bizumuremyi in the early hours of 15 January, and told him to stop criticising the government in his newspaper.

Bonaventure Bizumuremyi is the editor of the independent newspaper *Umuco*, published every two weeks. It has recently criticized the ruling Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) for its tight control of the judiciary, its alleged extortion of money from *co-operatives* (local businesses) and its inability to run the country.

On 15 January at 3am, four men armed with clubs and knives came to Bonaventure Bizumuremyi's house, in the capital, Kigali. They forced him to let them in, knocking over and breaking the furniture, and ordered him to stop publishing articles critical of the RPF.

The men left after neighbours came to see what was happening. The police arrived later.

Bonaventure Bizumuremyi has been repeatedly harassed and intimidated for his work as a journalist. Since September 2005, he has been detained and interrogated several times by the security services.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The RPF maintains tight control of the media, and hinders independent journalists by means of intimidation, harassment or arbitrary arrest. Many independent journalists and human rights activists have been forced to flee the country.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in French, English or your own language:

- expressing grave concern for the safety of Bonaventure Bizumuremyi, the editor of the newspaper *Umuco*, after men forced their way into his house and threatened him on 15 January;
- calling on the authorities to carry out a full and prompt independent investigation, and bring those responsible to justice;
- calling on the authorities to ensure that Bonaventure Bizumuremyi and all other journalists are allowed to work independently and in safety;
- calling on the authorities to recognize the fundamental right to freedom of expression, which is enshrined in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Rwanda is a state party.

APPEALS TO:

President

Président Paul Kagame

Présidence de la République

BP 15

Kigali

Rwanda

Fax: +250 58 43 90
Salutation: Monsieur le Président / Excellence

Minister of Justice
Madame Edda Mukabagwiza
Ministère de la Justice
BP 160
Kigali
Rwanda

Fax: +250 58 65 08
+250 58 70 51
Salutation: Madame la Ministre

Minister of the Interior
Monsieur Christophe Bazivamo
Ministère de l'Intérieur
BP 446
Kigali
Rwanda

Fax: +250 58 78 81
Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre

COPIES TO:

Independent press agency
La Maison de la Presse
BP 4305
Kigali
Rwanda

and to diplomatic representatives of Rwanda accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 4 March 2006.