

URGENT ACTION

DETAINED HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER AWAITING TRIAL

Nestor Nibitanga, a former member of the deregistered Association for the Protection of Human Rights and Detained Persons (APRODH), remains in detention awaiting trial for charges of ‘threatening state security’ and ‘rebellion’. He was arrested in Gitega, Burundi on 21 November 2017. Amnesty International considers him to be a prisoner of conscience.

Nestor Nibitanga, APRODH’s former regional observer responsible for central and eastern Burundi, is currently in detention awaiting trial. Police arrested him on the morning of 21 November 2017 at his home in the Musinzira neighbourhood of Gitega. In a tweet on the day of his arrest, the police said several documents were seized as evidence.

He was held by the National Intelligence Service (SNR) in the capital Bujumbura without access to his lawyer until 4 December 2017, before being transferred to Murembwa central prison in Rumonge. He has been charged with ‘threatening state security’ and ‘rebellion’. Amnesty International believes the charges are in retaliation for his peaceful human rights activities. Nestor Nibitanga was denied bail on 3 January 2018.

APRODH was closed down by the Minister of Interior in October 2016 alongside several other human rights organizations.

Amnesty International considers Nestor Nibitanga to be a prisoner of conscience who has been imprisoned solely for the peaceful exercise of his human rights.

1) TAKE ACTION

Write a letter, send an email, call, fax or tweet:

- Urging the authorities to drop all charges and release Nestor Nibitanga immediately and unconditionally;
- Calling on them to ensure that he has access to his family and the lawyer of his choice, pending his release;
- Urging them to ensure that he is protected from torture or other ill-treatment while detained;
- Urging them to stop harassing human rights defenders and to publicly recognize the legitimacy of their activities.

Contact these two officials by 27 March, 2018:

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

Ambassador Ernest Ndabashinze,
Embassy of the Republic of Burundi
2233 Wisconsin Ave. NW, Suite 408,
Washington DC 20007
Phone: 1 202 342 2574 | Fax: 1 202 342 2578
Email: burundiembusadc@gmail.com
Salutation: Dear Ambassador

2) LET US KNOW YOU TOOK ACTION

[Click here](#) to let us know if you took action on this case! *This is Urgent Action 257.17*

Here’s why it is so important to report your actions: we record the actions taken on each case—letters, emails, calls and tweets—and use that information in our advocacy.

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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.

Pierre-Claver Mbonimpa, APRODH's founder and one of Burundi's most respected human rights defenders, narrowly escaped an assassination attempt in August 2015, sustaining life threatening injuries. His son-in-law was killed by unknown assailants in Bujumbura in October 2015, and his son was killed in November 2015 after being arrested by the police.

Name: Nestor Nibitanga
Gender m/f: M

Further information on UA: 257/17 Index: AFR 16/7870/2018 Issue Date: 13 February 2018