



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2014 - 2019

Plenary sitting

10.2.2015

B8-0144/2015

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

with request for inclusion in the agenda for a debate on cases of breaches of human rights, democracy and the rule of law

pursuant to Rule 135 of the Rules of Procedure

on Burundi, notably the case of Bob Rugurika
(2015/2561(RSP))

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on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group

B8-0144/2015

European Parliament resolution on Burundi, notably the case of Bob Rugurika (2015/2561(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Burundi,
- having regard to the Cotonou agreement,
- having regard to the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement of 2000,
- having regard to the Universal declaration on Human Rights,
- having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,
- having regard to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights,
- having regard to African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (ACDEG),
- having regard to the Burundi roadmap of March 2013,
- having regard to rule 110 of its rules of procedure,

- A. Whereas Bob Rugurika is the director of the popular Radio Publique Africaine (RPA), and is well known for his investigative journalism;
- B. Whereas RPA frequently reports on human rights abuse and corruption;
- C. Whereas Bob Rugurika was arrested on January 20, days after his radio station broadcast a series of investigative reports on the murder of three Italian nuns four months ago, in which they claimed to have received information directly from the killers revealing the involvement of the senior officials from the state intelligence and security services;
- D. Whereas Bob Rugurika risks being charged with conspiracy to murder, obstructing justice, harbouring a criminal and failure to uphold public solidarity;
- E. Whereas muzzling the media is a common tactic in Burundi; and whereas the Burundian government has previously used the allegation of interference with criminal investigations in an attempt to stop the media and human rights groups from publishing sensitive information and, in particular, names of alleged human rights abusers;
- F. Whereas Bob Rugurika and other journalists have been subjected to intimidation before; whereas the human rights defender has been under surveillance and received

threatening phone calls in the past, after RPA reported on the killing in 2009 of anti-corruption activist Mr Ernest Manirumva, ex-vice president of the Observatoire de Lutte Contre la Corruption et les Malversations Economiques – OLUCOME (Observatory for the Fight Against Corruption and Economic Embezzlement), as well as a massacre in the town of Gatumba in 2011;

- G. Whereas the right to freedom of expression is guaranteed by the Constitution and international and regional treaties ratified by the State; but whereas the adoption of a series of restrict laws ahead of the 2015 elections, included the media law in April 2013, has added to the harassment and threats suffered since 2010 by journalists and other critical voices denouncing political assassinations, corruption and poor management of the country;
 - H. Whereas Burundi is facing a mounting risk of unrest ahead of elections, with hundreds of civilians killed or disappeared, due to the ongoing political impasse over moves by President Pierre Nkurunziza to run for a third term;
 - I. Whereas unrest and human rights violations in Burundi can easily spillover to neighboring countries in the Great Lakes region and thus have multiplier effects;
 - J. Whereas Youth from the CNDD-FDD, the Imbonerakure are regularly involved in human rights violations (beatings, acts of intimidation, restrictions on the holding of political meetings) and have also been implied in several murders between 2012 and 2014;
 - K. Whereas Burundi is signatory of the Cotonou agreement whereby respect for human rights is an essential element of the EU and ACP cooperation;
1. Condemns the detention of Bob Rugirika, which constitutes another blow to media freedom, and demands its immediate and unconditional release; calls equally for the setting-up of an independent international inquiry on the murder of the three Italian nuns;
 2. Deplores the mounting internal insecurity and violence ahead of the elections and the introduction of restrictive laws ahead of the country's 2015 presidential and parliamentary elections, which result in weakening opposition parties, the media and civil societies;
 3. Believes that the authorities of Burundi have the responsibility to create peaceful and democratic environment in the country and stop the violence linked to the electoral process;

4. Stresses that full respect for freedom of expression, including for journalists and defenders of Human Rights, is an essential condition for the holding of free and fair elections in 2015 and for the result to be accepted by all the participants;
5. Recalls that Burundi is bound by the human rights clause of the Cotonou Agreement and by the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and therefore has an obligation to respect universal human rights, including freedom of expression;
6. Calls on the government of Burundi to allow genuine and open political debate ahead of elections in 2015 without fear of intimidation by not interfering in the internal management of the opposition parties; putting no restrictions to campaigning for all parties -especially in rural areas-; and by not abusing the judiciary to exclude political competitors;
7. Encourages all those taking part in the electoral process to respect the commitments made in the Arusha Agreement (2000) on the basis of which the Burundian Constitution is based, and which stipulates that the President of the Republic « is elected for a five year term renewable once. No one can serve for more than two terms as president»;
8. More broadly, calls on the Burundi Government to respect the Road Map and the Code of Conduct negotiated under the auspices of the United Nations and signed by all the Burundian political leaders, the Constitution of Burundi, the Arusha Agreement and the Electoral Code;
9. Denounces all human rights violations in general, and in particular those that harm the political opposition, the media and civil society by restricting freedom of expression and of association; and urges the Burundi Government to ensure the independence of the justice sector from executive power;
10. Denounces acts of violence and intimidation committed by the security services and by party youth leagues, in particular by the CNDD-FDD youth (Imbonerakure);
11. Urges the Burundian government to take measures to control the CNDD-FDD youth league, preventing them from intimidating and attacking perceived opponents and ensure that those responsible for abuses are brought to justice; calls for an independent international investigation into the claims that the CNDD-FDD arms and trains its youth wing; urges leaders of opposition parties to prevent violence against their opponents.
12. Call on the Burundi government, opposition party leaders and civil society activists to do their utmost to support the Peace and Reconciliation Commission (RPC) in a democratic and transparent way in order to deal with the past crime and move forward to prepare the future;
13. Calls on Great Lakes countries to maintain a high level of commitment to jointly promote peace and stability in the region through existing regional mechanism and to intensify their efforts on regional economic development, paying special attention to

reconciliation, respect for human rights, fight against impunity, establishment of better judicial accountability;

14. Instructs its president to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, African Union and the Burundi government