



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2014 - 2019

Plenary sitting

10.2.2015

B8-0152/2015

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: Arbitrary arrest and detention of human rights defender and Journalist Bob Rugurika
(2015/2561(RSP))

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on behalf of the EFDD Group

B8-0152/2015

European Parliament resolution on Burundi: Arbitrary arrest and detention of human rights defender and Journalist Bob Rugurika (2015/2561(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights
 - having regard to the Cotonou agreement, and to the Second Revision of the Cotonou Partnership Agreement
 - having regard to the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement,
 - having regard to the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,
 - having regard to the numerous UN Security Council resolutions and statements,
 - having regard to latest appeals of the UN Human Rights Committee;
 - having regard to Council Conclusions on the Great Lakes Region of 22 July 2014, in particular point 7 thereof,
 - having regard to Articles 13-19 of the Burundian Constitution,
 - having regards to article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and General Comment 22 by the United Nations Human Rights Committee
 - having regard to the African Charter of Human and Peoples' Rights
 - having regard to its previous resolutions on Burundi,
 - having regard to Rule 135(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas Burundi has ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights (ACHPR), Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (CPPCG), and the United Nations Convention Against Torture (Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment - CATCIDTP),
- B. whereas Bob Rugurika, director of Radio Publique Africaine (RPA), was arrested on 20 January after broadcasting investigative reports into the September 2014 murder of three Italian nuns; whereas one of the broadcasts included an individual who alleged

that he participated in the murder and that senior intelligence officials were also involved;

- C. whereas after refusing to reveal the name of his source, Bob Rugurika has been detained; a few days later he was moved to Muramvya Prison,
- D. whereas Bob Rugurika might be charged with „complicity in the murder“, „obstructing the course of justice through violating confidentiality of a criminal investigation“, „harbouring a criminal“ and „lacking public solidarity“; whereas in the past he has been repeatedly threatened and harassed,
- E. whereas 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 on 7 May 2012, the human rights journalist, Mr Bob Rugurika, sent a formal letter to President Nkurunziza, appealing for protection in the face of a number of serious threats reportedly received from police and officials from SNR; whereas in his letter, Bob Rugurika describes the threats received and states that he has become aware of a plan for his physical elimination
- G. whereas the EU has allocated Burundi EUR 432 million from the European Development Fund 2014-2020, to assist with improving governance and civil society amongst other things,
- H. Whereas the right to freedom of thought, including political, is a universal human right and a fundamental freedom of each human being, interrelated with other human rights and fundamental freedoms as enshrined in Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;
- I. Whereas Burundi is one of the five [poorest countries in the world](#) with one of the lowest GDP per capita; whereas many Burundians have become increasingly frustrated at the increasing cost of food, water and fuel, high levels of corruption and the unaccountability of political leaders; Whereas Burundi is currently facing its worst political crisis since it emerged from a 12-year civil war in 2005, posing once again threats not only to the country's internal stability, but also to that of its neighbors in an already volatile region of the African continent.
 - 1. Condemns the unjustified detention of Bob Rugurika ;Calls on Burundi's public authorities to release Bob Rugurika from detention without delay while the investigation into the murder of the nuns must be continued, and to ensure that all charges pressed against him be reviewed in a fair trial;
 - 2. Insists that Mr Bob Rugurika 's right to exercise his profession as an independent journalist is in accordance with Burundi's constitution and the country's international commitments on Human Rights;

3. Urges the Burundi authorities to respect article 13-19 of their constitution,
4. Stress that if Bob Rugurika is to be ordered to reveal his sources , he should be able to challenge that order before a court which should take full consideration of the journalistic privilege of protection of sources; Recalls the Burundi authorities that is more productive and essential to investigate on the information given by the " source" that the origin of the source
5. Calls on the Government of Burundi to guarantee the peaceful exercise of the freedoms of expression, association and assembly in line with its international obligations and to immediately stop any politically motivated detention; Reminds the Government of Burundi the obligation to uphold the right to freedom of expression as a state party to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights
6. Stresses the need for combined efforts and coherent institutional engagement by the EEAS and the European Commission to improving the Human Rights situation in Burundi;
7. Condemns the persistent oppression of human rights activists, journalists, political opponents, victims and witnesses in Burundi
8. Notes with concern that since President Pierre Nkurunziza's re-election in 2010, there is more and more intimidation and harassment towards human rights defenders, journalists, opposition leaders
9. Calls on the Burundi authorities to ensure that all charges pressed against prisoners be reviewed in a fair trial ,
10. Calls on countries of the Great Lakes region to address the unlawful activities of Imbonerakure and jointly address such problems with the Government of Burundi; calls on such countries to maintain a high level of commitment to promoting peace and stability 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
11. Expresses deep concern about the absence of justice for scores of political killings between 2010 and 2012, following the 2010 elections; calls on the Burundian authorities to ensure that the perpetrators of these killings are brought to justice, in fair trials, and make every effort to prevent political violence before the 2015 elections.
12. Calls, once again, for Bob Rugurika release from jail, for respect of the freedom of speech and Human Rights in general in Burundi, and for ending violence against, and especially arbitrary detentions of, political activists and journalists in the country
13. Calls on the Burundian authorities to respect the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, so as to ensure the safety and protection of human rights

14. urges the government of Burundi to take all necessary measures to stop, without delay, any form of politically motivated violence ; reminds that that any violence or type of intimidation is likely to worsen in the electoral run-up
15. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the African Union, the UN Secretary-General, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Government of Burundi.