



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2014 - 2019

Plenary sitting

10.2.2015

B8-0163/2015

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: the case of Bob Rugurika
(2015/2561(RSP))

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on behalf of the PPE Group

B8-0163/2015

**European Parliament resolution on Burundi: 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 statement of 10 September 2014 by the EU Delegation to Burundi,
 - having regard to the UN Security Council statement of 10 April 2014 on the situation in Burundi,
 - having regard to the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement,
 - having regard to the Council conclusions on the Great Lakes region of 22 July 2014, in particular point 7 thereof,
 - having regard to the reports of the UN Office in Burundi (BNUB),
 - having regard to the third workshop held at Gitega on 23 October 2014, organised by Burundi Government and the Office of the UN in Burundi (BNUB) to evaluate progress on the electoral road map drawn up in March 2013,
 - having regard to the Universal Declaration of 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 Rules 135(5) and 123(4) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas director of Radio Publique Africaine Bob Rugurika was charged and taken into arbitrary detention following the station's broadcast of an interview in which an unidentified guest said he was involved in the September 2014 murder of three Italian nuns Lucia Pulici, Olga Raschietti and Bernadetta Boggian, in Kamenge, a town north of Bujumbura;
- B. whereas Mr Rugurika was arrested on the orders of a prosecutor and taken to Bujumbura's main prison, Mpimba, on 20 January after initially receiving a summons to present himself to judicial officials for the stated purpose of providing "clarification" on his reporting;
- C. whereas the prosecutor accused Mr Rugurika in court of concealing the identity of the individual involved in the murders of three nuns who also identified others who participated in the murders, including former and current intelligence and police officers;

- D. whereas Mr Rugurika is detained since 22 January 2015 and facing a possible 20-year jail sentence on charges of complicity in the triple murder, harbouring criminals, violating the confidentiality of a judicial investigation and "failing to show solidarity";
- E. whereas Mr Rugurika's unjustified detention is to pressure him into revealing the identity of his contacts;
- F. whereas Mr Rugurika is the director of Bujumbura-based Radio Publique Africaine (RPA), which is renowned for its investigative reporting and is Burundi's most popular privately-owned radio station;
- G. whereas Burundi adopted a media law in 2013 that criminalizes certain kinds of reporting, including reporting involving national security, and makes it possible to force journalists to name their sources;
- H. whereas, journalists and civil society representatives staged two demonstration in Bujumbura to show support for Mr Rugurika and demanded his release;
- I. whereas full respect for freedom of expression, including for journalists and human rights defenders, is a precondition for free and fair legislative and presidential elections in 2015 and for the results thereof to be accepted by everyone;
- J. whereas the EU has recently allocated EUR 432 million to Burundi from the European Development Fund 2014-2020, to assist with improving governance and civil society, among other things;
- K. whereas Burundi is one of the five poorest countries in the world, with one of the lowest GDPs 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;
- L. whereas the United Nations Office in Burundi (BNUB) completed its Security Council mandate on 31 December 2014 and transferred its responsibilities to the UN Country Team consisting of agencies, funds and programmes, based on the UN Development Assistance Framework, known as UNDAF;
- M. whereas Burundi is currently facing its worst political crisis since it emerged from a 12-year civil war in 2005, and whereas this is once again posing threats not only to the country's internal stability, but also to that of its neighbours in an already volatile region of the African continent;
1. Firmly condemns the arbitrary detention of Mr Bob Rugurika and calls for his immediate unconditional release;
 2. Deplores that the judicial authorities, showing no evidence for his detention, ruled that Mr Rugurika should stay in jail until his trial begins, to preserve evidence, prevent a fraudulent consultation between the accused and complete the investigation;
 3. Expresses deep concern about 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 freedom to hold meetings;

4. Reiterates in this context the importance of respecting the Code of Conduct in electoral matters (*Code de bonne conduite en matière électorale*) and the UN-brokered election roadmap which was signed by political actors in 2013, and fully supports the activities of the BNUB aimed at preventing a further increase in political violence in the run-up to the 2015 elections and helping restore long-term security and peace;
5. Reiterates that it is crucial that the European Union commits itself to monitoring and influencing the pre-electoral situation so as to avoid any backsliding which could have a serious effect not only on the democratisation process but also on peace and security in Burundi and throughout the Great Lakes region;
6. Recalls that Burundi is bound by the human rights clause of the Cotonou Agreement, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and therefore has an obligation to respect universal human rights, including freedom of expression; calls on the Government of Burundi to allow genuine and open political debate to take place ahead of the elections in 2015 without fear of intimidation, by refraining from interfering in the internal management of the opposition parties, from placing restrictions on campaigning for all parties, especially in rural areas, and from abusing the judiciary to exclude political rivals;
7. Encourages all sides to keep to their commitments contained in the 2000 Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement, which was instrumental in ending 12 years of civil conflict in 2005; warns against amending the Burundian constitution in such a way as to strip it of the fundamental power-sharing provisions stipulated in the Arusha agreements;
8. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Member States, the Government of Burundi and governments of the countries of the Great Lakes region, the African Union, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the Co-Presidents of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly and the Pan-African Parliament.