

PUBLIC

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20 January 2006

UA 16/06

Intimidation/fear for safety

RWANDA

**Bonaventure Bizumuremyi (m), journalist**

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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'Interieur  
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.