

PUBLIC

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Medical Concern

RWANDA

Idesbald Byabuze Kataruka (m), Congolese national

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Law professor Idesbald Byabuze Kataruka was arrested on 16 February, and charged on 23 February with "threatening state security" and "discrimination and sectarianism". A magistrate has ruled that he can be held for up to 30 days before his trial begins, and this can be extended. He is held in Kigali Central Prison where he is not receiving essential food and medication for a stomach condition. His health is deteriorating daily.

Idesbald Byabuze Kataruka has suffered from a serious stomach condition for most of his adult life. He has been operated on and three quarters of his stomach removed. His condition requires a special diet and medication. He is currently receiving neither, despite his requests to the prison authorities.

Idesbald Byabuze Kataruka is a professor at the Catholic University of Bukavu, in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, near the border with Rwanda. When he was arrested he was teaching a law course at a university in the Rwandan capital, Kigali.

The Rwandan public prosecutor issued the charges in relation to several public documents which Idesbald Byabuze Kataruka had allegedly written or co-authored, including an article entitled *Alerte Rwanda* ("Rwanda Warning"). The article, published on an African current affairs website in June 2005, was an overview of human rights concerns in Rwanda. It was highly critical of the ruling Rwandan Patriotic Front.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

The arrest of Idesbald Byabuze Kataruka is part of a pattern of harassment and intimidation of civil society by the Rwandan authorities. Independent newspapers such as *Umuco* and *Umuseso* have regularly been verbally threatened, arbitrarily arrested, harassed and intimidated by the Rwandan authorities.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in English, French or your own language:**

- expressing concern that Congolese law professor Idesbald Byabuze Kataruka was arrested on 16 February, and is not receiving essential food and medication for his stomach condition;
- calling on the authorities to ensure that Idesbald Byabuze Kataruka is brought to trial without delay and in full compliance with international fair trial standards;
- stating that unless the authorities have sufficient admissible evidence to try him, they must release him immediately.

**APPEALS TO:**

Minister of Internal Security  
Sheikh Fazil Musa Harerimana  
Ministère de la Sécurité Intérieure  
BP 446  
Kigali  
Rwanda  
Fax: +250 58 43 73

**Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre**

Minister of Justice

Monsieur Tharcisse Karugarama

Ministère de la Justice

BP 160

Kigali

Rwanda

**Fax: +250 58 65 09**

**Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre**

**COPIES 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 19 April 2007.