

URGENT ACTION

JOURNALISTS RELEASED ON PRESIDENTIAL PARDON

On 22 October 2019, four Burundian journalists - Agnès Ndirubusa, Christine Kamikazi, Egide Harerimana, and Térence Mpozenzi- were arrested when they went to Bubanza province to report on clashes between the security forces and an armed group. Although they were originally charged with complicity in threatening the internal security of the state, they were convicted of "attempting to commit the crime", a lesser criminal offense. They were released on 24 December 2020, following a presidential pardon granted the day before.

NO FURTHER ACTION IS REQUESTED. MANY THANKS TO ALL WHO SENT APPEALS.

On 24 December 2020, four journalists for the privately-owned news outlet, *Iwacu* were released on a presidential pardon after 14 months in prison. **Agnès Ndirubusa, Christine Kamikazi, Egide Harerimana, and Térence Mpozenzi** were arrested on 22 October 2019, in Bubanza province, northwestern Burundi, where they had gone to cover reports of clashes between the security forces and an armed group. Prior to their trip, they had informed the provincial authorities of their plan to travel to the area. They were later accused of threatening internal state security and charged with "complicity in threatening the internal security of the state". On 30 January 2020, they were convicted to a lesser criminal offense of "attempting to commit a crime" and sentenced to two-and-a-half years in prison and a fine of one million Burundian francs (approximately 525 US dollars).

During their trial, the prosecution presented no evidence of their having had any contact with any armed group. Their conviction was in violation of both Burundi's constitutional and international guarantees on freedom of expression.

Iwacu is one of the few remaining privately-owned media houses operational in Burundi. Hundreds of journalists and human rights defenders have fled the country since the start of the political crisis sparked by then President Pierre Nkurunziza's decision to stand for a third term in 2015, and those still working in the country often face threats and harassment.

In our action, we targeted the current President Evariste Ndayishimiye. We are certain that Amnesty International's campaigning, together with the actions of other national, regional, and international organizations, contributed to his decision to pardon the four journalists.

NAME AND PRONOUN: Agnès Ndirubusa (she/her), Christine Kamikazi (she/her), Egide Harerimana (him/his), Térence Mpozenzi (him/his)

THIS IS THE THIRD AND FINAL OUTPUT FOR UA 149/19

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr16/1932/2020/en/>

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