

URGENT ACTION

CONVICTED DOCTOR'S LIFE IN DANGER IN DETENTION

On 16 September 2025, the Court of Appeal of Muha in Bujumbura, Burundi, confirmed the Muha High Court's February 2025 decision to hand medical doctor, Christophe Sahabo a 20-year prison sentence. Dr. Sahabo's health continues to deteriorate in prison and yet he continues – according to family members - to be denied access to adequate medical care he requires. Amnesty International calls on the Burundian authorities to ensure Dr. Sahabo's right to health is protected and guaranteed by granting him immediate access to necessary medical care.

TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER

President of the Republic of Burundi

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Dear Mr President,

I write to express deep concern for **Dr. Christophe Sahabo**, former Director General of Kira Hospital. I am alarmed that his health continues to deteriorate rapidly due to the lack of adequate and urgent medical care he requires and yet has been deprived of in detention.

On 16 September, the Muha Court of Appeal confirmed the Muha High Court's February 2025 decision to hand Dr. Christophe Sahabo a 20-year prison sentence, despite serious concerns over the fairness of the trial and the lack of credible evidence to support the charges related to the mismanagement of Kira Hospital.

Reports received by Amnesty International indicate that Dr. Sahabo's health has worsened significantly during his over three-year imprisonment. In September 2024, at Amnesty International's request, two independent doctors reviewed Dr. Sahabo's medical file and confirmed that his chronic kidney failure condition was potentially life-threatening. Despite repeated requests from his lawyers and family, he has not been granted access to specialized medical treatment, a violation of both Burundi's Constitution and its obligations under international human rights law, including the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (Nelson Mandela Rules).

The failure of the Minister of Justice and prison authorities to act has placed Dr. Sahabo's life at imminent risk.

Based on the above, as Head of State with the responsibility to ensure the rights and dignity of everyone in Burundi, including those in detention, I urge you to act without delay to:

- **Ensure that Dr. Christophe Sahabo receives immediate access to independent and adequate medical care, as recommended by qualified health professionals.**
- **Ensure and guarantee his safety and humane treatment in accordance with Burundi's international human rights obligations.**
- **Ensure the review of his detention conditions to prevent further deterioration of his health and to uphold the right to health for all persons deprived of liberty.**

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Dr. Christophe Sahabo, Managing Director of Kira Hospital in Bujumbura, Burundi, was arrested in April 2022 alongside Jean-David Pillot, Chair of the hospital's Board of Directors. The latter was released after one night in detention, but Dr. Sahabo remained in custody for several days without access to his family or lawyers of his choosing. He was detained in a National Intelligence Service (SNR) cell, where he spent more than 30 days before being presented to a magistrate and transferred to Mpimba prison. On 29 September 2022, he was moved to Ruyigi prison, approximately 160 km from Bujumbura, where his case is being heard. His family and lawyers alleged that he was pressured and forced to resign from his role at Kira Hospital over unsubstantiated allegations of fraud, money laundering, and document forgery. A financial audit commissioned by Kira Hospital's interim officials reportedly found no evidence of wrongdoing on Dr. Sahabo's part. On 27 September 2022, his brother and his lawyer were arrested and accused by the Prosecutor General of forging the minutes of Kira Hospital's General Assembly meeting that reinstated him as director; both were released on 7 October 2022 after the lawyer recused herself from the case.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: French

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 21 April 2026

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PRONOUN: Christophe Sahabo (he/him)

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr16/8534/2024/en/>