

URGENT ACTION

POLITICIAN CHARGED, WAS NOT ILL-TREATED

Rwandan politician Deogratias Mushayidi has now been granted access to legal counsel, and was brought before a court on 18 March. His lawyer has confirmed that he is in good health and has been treated well by the authorities.

Deogratias Mushayidi was brought before the Nyarugenge Intermediary Court (*Tribunal de Grande Instance de Nyarugenge*) on 18 March. He was charged with using false documents, and other offences including threatening state security, collaborating with a terrorist group (the *Forces Démocratiques de Libération du Rwanda*, FDLR) and "genocide ideology." He pleaded guilty to using false documents and not-guilty to the other charges.

On 19 March, the Nyarugenge Intermediary Court ordered that Mushayidi should be held in preventative detention, in Kigali Central Prison.

Deogratias (usually known as Deo) Mushayidi is the Chairman of a political party, the Pact for People's Defence (*Pacte de Défense du Peuple*, PDP). It was founded in Belgium, and is active with Rwandans living abroad, but not registered in Rwanda. He was head of the Rwandan Journalists' Association from 1996 to 2000. He is an outspoken critic of the Rwandan government.

No further action is requested from the UA network. Many thanks to all who sent appeals.

This is the first etc update of UA 56/10. Further information: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/AFR47/001/2010/en>

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During the 100 days of the government-orchestrated 1994 genocide in Rwanda up to 800,000 Rwandans were killed, most of them ethnic Tutsi, but also some Hutu who opposed this organised killing and the forces directing it.

The killings took place during the armed conflict between government forces and the then armed opposition group known as the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), which continued from October 1990 to July 1994. Both sides committed gross human rights abuses, besides the genocide.

In 2008, Rwanda adopted a law criminalizing "genocide ideology," making it punishable by 10 to 25 years' imprisonment to engage in speech or other acts aimed "at exterminating or inciting others to exterminate people basing (sic) on ethnic group, origin, nationality, region, colour, physical appearance, sex, language, religion or political opinion." The law is vague, ambiguous, includes terms such as "laughing at one's misfortune," "stirring up ill feelings" and "propounding wickedness," and criminalizes speech protected by international conventions.

Further information on UA: 56/10 Index: AFR 47/002/2010 Issue Date: 1 April 2010

