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Dear Mr. President

On behalf of Amnesty International and 33.629 Danish and Faroe citizens who have signed our urgent action we urge you to release human rights defender Germain Rukuki.

On 26 April 2018, Germain Rukuki, the president of a community-based organization called Njubutsa Tujane and an employee of the Burundian Catholic Lawyers Association, was sentenced to 32 years in prison by the Ntahangwa High Court. He had been arrested on 13 July 2017 in the capital Bujumbura. Germain was found guilty of “rebellion”, “threatening state security”, “attacking the authority of the state” and “participation in an insurrectionist movement”, and acquitted on charges of “assassination” and “destruction of public and private buildings”. Neither he nor his lawyers were present when the verdict was delivered. Amnesty International believes that Germain Rukuki has been prosecuted solely because of his human rights work and considers him to be a prisoner of conscience.

In June 2020, Burundi’s Supreme Court overturned an earlier Appeal Court decision that had confirmed Rukuki’s sentence, and ordered the Appeal Court to reconsider the appeal with a new panel of judges. It cited procedural irregularities following a change of judges midway through the initial appeal proceedings.

In March 2021 the Appeal Court of Ntahangwa held the hearing at Ngozi Prison, where Rukuki has spent four years behind bars. The court has not announced a verdict in the case even though according to legal statutes, this verdict was due within 30 days of the appeal hearing, by 24 April 2021.

**Amnesty International and the signatories urge you to:**

- Overturn Germain Rukuki’s conviction and immediately and unconditionally release him
- Ensure that Germain Rukuki receives adequate medical treatment as required by his state of health
- End the intimidation and harassment of human rights defenders in Burundi.

Please do consider our recommendations. A list of the signatories is enclosed.

Yours sincerely,

Stinne Lyager Bech  
Head of Policy  
Amnesty International Denmark