

Prosecutor General of the Republic Sylvestre Nyandwi

Parquet général

B. P. 105

Bujumbura, Burundi

Dear Mr Prosecutor General,

I am appalled by the continued detention of Iwacu journalists **Agnès Ndirubusa, Christine Kamikazi, Egide Harerimana, TERENCE MPOZENZI** and their driver **Adolphe Masabarakiza** since they were arbitrarily arrested in Bubanza Province on 22 October 2019.

According to Iwacu, a Burundian independent news outlet, its employees were in Bubanza to investigate reports of clashes between the security forces and an armed group in the province. As is their usual practice, they had informed the provincial authorities of their plan to travel to the area, only to be arrested upon arrival.

On 31 October the Council Chamber of the Bubanza Tribunal decided to keep the five in detention at Bubanza Central Prison where they had been transferred from police cells by the provincial prosecutor's office five days earlier. They were charged with undermining state security the same day.

I note your press statement of 31 October in which you stated that they were not arrested for being journalists, but rather for the facts for which they are accused. However, the activity for which they are accused – travelling to an area to investigate recent events – is precisely the kind journalists are expected to undertake.

I believe Agnès Ndirubusa, Christine Kamikazi, Egide Harerimana, TERENCE MPOZENZI and Adolphe Masabarakiza were arrested and are being targeted simply for doing their work. Therefore, I call on you to ensure that all accusations against them are dropped and that they are released immediately and unconditionally.

Yours sincerely,