

*When will the truth be revealed about the assassination of Ernest MANIRUMVA?*



Two years after the assassination of Ernest Manirumva, former Vice-President of the Anti-Corruption and Economic Malpractice Observatory (OLUCOME), the Burundian justice system is struggling to shed light on this crime and investigations remain incomplete.

On this occasion, the signatories of this statement:

1. Express concern at the slowness of the Burundian justice system in handling the case of the assassination of Ernest Manirumva. After the trial opened at the Bujumbura Appeals Court on 14 July 2010 and the first hearing was adjourned one month later, it has taken a further four months to issue summonses for all the accused persons. Similarly, more than two months after the Bujumbura Appeals Court ruled that the case should be transferred to the Intermediate Court of Bujumbura, some of the accused, notably those with no fixed address, have still not been issued with a summons and the date for the next hearing has not been set.

2. Wonder about the motives of the Burundian government in preventing civil society organisations from publicly expressing their indignation at the inexplicable slowness of the Burundian justice system in handling this case, despite the fact that the Burundian constitution and regional and international human rights instruments ratified by Burundi guarantee this right.

3. Recall that the investigations have still not been completed and that further obligations should be fulfilled in light of the current state of the case file. These obligations are based, in particular, on the report of the commission of inquiry into the assassination of Ernest Manirumva drawn up on 8 April 2010 (file RMP 12895/NDE/HH) as well as the memorandum of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) submitted to the Burundian authorities on 26 July 2010.

Any conclusion drawn from the case file before these additional obligations have been fulfilled could lead to a parody of justice.

4. Regret, in this regard, that the relevant Burundian authorities have not followed up on the requests of those committed to seeking the truth about this assassination, in particular:

- an invitation by the Canadian authorities, fourteen months ago, to send an international rogatory commission to interview one of the suspects who had fled to Canada;
- a request, made in the report of the third commission of inquiry a year ago, to interview and confront a number of police officers;
- a request by the FBI eight months ago to conduct DNA tests on a number of individuals.

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5. Regret that no witness protection mechanism has been put in place, despite recommendations to this effect from civil society over the last year.

6. Regret that no serious investigation has been conducted into the elimination or disappearance of individuals who may have been implicated in the preparation or the execution of the assassination of Ernest Manirumva – for example, the murder of Captain Pacifique Ndikuriyo, officer of the Presidential Guard, on 30 April 2009 in Mutakura, and the disappearance of police officer Ezéchiel Icoyitungiye in March 2010.

7. Call on the judge in charge of the case to:

- Prioritise the Ernest Manirumva case and publish the date on which the trial will resume;
- Order the prosecution to promptly fulfill its additional obligations, notably those contained in the conclusions of the report of the third commission of inquiry into the assassination of Ernest Manirumva and in the FBI memorandum;
- Demonstrate independence and explore all leads around this crime in order to reassure the civil party, notably the family of Ernest Manirumva and OLUCOME;
- Reassure the civil party (the family of Ernest Manirumva, OLUCOME) that there is genuine will to uncover the truth about the assassination of Manirumva by showing absolute independence in order to explore all leads around this crime;
- Do everything possible to shed light on other crimes which may be linked to the assassination of Ernest Manirumva;
- Promptly analyse, case by case, the files of individuals who have been detained with a view to provisionally releasing those against whom there is no serious evidence of involvement in the assassination of Ernest Manirumva.

8. Call on the Burundian government to:

- Set up a witness protection mechanism which would allow witnesses to testify in complete safety and confidentiality. Such a mechanism would be particularly important for those who may hold information implicating members of the security forces;
- Respect and guarantee public freedoms and the fundamental rights of citizens, in accordance with the Burundian constitution and regional and international human rights protection instruments ratified by Burundi.

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SIGNATORIES:

Action des Chrétiens pour l'Abolition de la Torture (ACAT Burundi)  
Amnesty International (AI)  
Association pour la Défense des Droits de la Femme (ADDF)  
Association pour la Protection des droits humains et des personnes détenues (APRODH)  
Coalition de la Société Civile pour le Monitoring Electoral (COSOME)  
Collectif des Associations et ONGs Féminines du Burundi (CAFOB)  
Collectif pour la Promotion des Associations des Jeunes (CPAJ)  
Confédération des Syndicats du Burundi (COSYBU)  
East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project (EHAHRDP)  
Forum pour le renforcement de la société civile (FORSC)  
Front Line  
Human Rights Watch (HRW)  
Ligue Burundaise des Droits de l'Homme ITEKA  
Observatoire de l'Action Gouvernementale (OAG)  
Observatoire de Lutte contre la Corruption et les Malversations Économiques (OLUCOME)  
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