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Summary

1. Politics

Rwanda: Ex-Kigali Official Sentenced to Life

A former senior official in Kigali City was, on Tuesday, sentenced to life by a Gacaca court for Genocide crimes. The Gacaca Court of Gahogo Sector of Muhanga District found Sophanie Rutayisire responsible for, among others, the death of 80 Tutsis who had sought refuge at B.G.M. Rubirizi College in Kanombe, Kicukiro District, and the disappearance of several others shortly before the Genocide.

2. Peace keeping/ Conflict Resolution and Security matters

Rwanda: Ntaganda, Co-Accused Appear Before Court

The trial of Bernard Ntaganda, the leader of a faction of Parti Social (PS) Imberakuri political party, and 8 others accused of threatening state security and organizing an illegal demonstration, among other charges, resumed yesterday at Nyarugenge Intermediate Court. Bernard Ntaganda and eight others were rounded up by police on the June 24 as they planned to carryout a demonstration without permission from authorities.

Rwanda: Peacekeepers Mark Rwanda Liberation Anniversary

African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) marked the 16th anniversary of Rwanda's liberation. The event, which brought together UNAMID staff and other delegates, was held at UNAMID Super Camp, El Fasher in Darfur, Sudan.

National Mourning Declared for Victims of Congo Explosion

President Kabila has declared a national period of mourning after a tanker explosion left more than 200 dead in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. Flags around the Kinshasa flew at half staff after President Joseph Kabila of the Democratic Republic of the Congo declared two days of national mourning for victims. Mr. Kabila has flown to the site of the explosion to console families of the victims killed and observe the humanitarian relief efforts.

3. Social issues/ Human Rights

Red Cross Assists Thousands of Displaced in Remote Area of DRC Lisa Schlein

The International Committee of the Red Cross has begun the distribution of seed, agricultural and fishing tools to some 35,000 people in Equateur province, a remote region in northern Democratic Republic of Congo. The aid will allow tens of thousands of people in the town of Dongo and the surrounding area to plant their crops in time for

the next harvest in November. Almost the entire town of Dongo, some 100,000 people, fled ethnic clashes that erupted in October. The violence between rival tribal groups erupted over farming and fishing rights. Most people fled to the neighboring Republic of the Congo and the Central African Republic. But, tens of thousands have remained in the DRC and several thousands have returned to Dongo to try to pick up their lives as best they can.

São Tomé tropical island paradise

African travel destination is the still undiscovered pearl São Tomé, with excellent beaches, lush volcanic rainforest and farms, warm Portuguese architecture, Creole culture and African hospitality. São Tomé hosts the capital with the same name of Africa's smallest state São Tomé and Príncipe, consisting of only two volcanic islands in the Gulf of Guinea just north of the equator. A former Portuguese colony transferred into a developing democracy, the country with a GDP smaller than many companies is too tiny to hit world media, or even to market its great tourism potentials.

Congo-Kinshasa: ICC Suspends Trial of Warlord Accused of Recruiting Child Soldiers

The International Criminal Court (ICC) today suspended proceedings in the case of a Congolese warlord accused of recruiting child soldiers, saying that prosecutors have refused orders to disclose information to his defence. Thomas Lubanga Dyilo, the founder and leader of the Union of Congolese Patriots in the Ituri region of the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), faces two counts of war crimes: conscripting and enlisting child soldiers into the military wing of his group and then using them to participate in hostilities between September 2002 and August 2003. His trial began at The Hague, where the ICC is based, in January 2009.

5. Elections

Rwanda: NEC Confirms Four Presidential Candidates

President Paul Kagame (RPF), Prosper Higiroya (PL), Dr Jean Damascene Ntawukuriryayo (PSD) and Dr Alvera Mukabaramba (PPC) have been given the green light to contest in the August 10 presidential elections. The four presidential candidates were announced, yesterday, by the Chairman of the National Electoral Commission (NEC), Prof. Chrysologue Karangwa, at the commission's head office in Kimihurura, Kigali. Karangwa said that campaigns will kick off on July 20, and end on August 8, a day before the elections. Meanwhile, NEC Executive Secretary, Charles Munyaneza, announced that the Government provided up to Rwf7.4 billion towards the election budget, which is equivalent to 83 percent of the total bill.

Rwanda: Journalists Association to Monitor Election Coverage

The Rwanda Journalists Association (ARJ), will for the first time, monitor the media's coverage of the forthcoming presidential elections. According to a statement from ARJ, the objective of the monitoring is to assess the media's performance in terms of fairness, transparency and independence during the election period. Monitors will produce a report that will be used as a reference document on how the Rwandan media covered the elections.

Rwanda's Kagame to Face 3 Challengers in Election

Rwanda's electoral commission said that four candidates, including the incumbent, are cleared to run in the August 9 ballot. The commission says some people who were expected to run, including opposition figure Victoire Ingabire, did not submit applications. Critics have accused President Kagame of stifling opposition and freedom of expression ahead of the poll. Rwandan authorities arrested Ingabire in April and accused her of working with rebels to destabilize the country.

Rwanda: Editor Arrested After Criticizing Kagame Government

Police in Rwanda arrested the editor of a private newspaper in connection with a series of articles critical of the government, according to local journalists. Agnès Uwimana was taken into custody in the capital, Kigali, over allegations that her Kinyarwanda-language weekly Umurabyo had published stories "inciting the public to disobey," "articles related to division and ethnicity," and "rumors that can cause disturbance in the country," Rwandan National Police spokesman Eric Kayiranga told CPJ today. Kayiranga said police acted in the public interest and would take Uwimana to court next week.

Rwanda: Police Warn Ingabire and Co. against Slander

Rwanda national police has warned the so-called Permanent Consultative Council of Opposition Parties in Rwanda (PCC) against making false accusations that opposition politicians are being tortured. Police issued the warning, yesterday, after it emerged that nine people, who were arrested for illegally organizing a protest, are claiming to have been tortured by police, accusations the Police has strongly denied.

Details

1. Politics

Rwanda: Ex-Kigali Official Sentenced to Life

The New Times

Kigali — a former senior official in Kigali City was, on Tuesday, sentenced to life by a Gacaca court for Genocide crimes.

The Gacaca Court of Gahogo Sector of Muhanga District found Sophanie Rutayisire responsible for, among others, the death of 80 Tutsis who had sought refuge at B.G.M. Rubirizi College in Kanombe, Kicukiro District, and the disappearance of several others shortly before the Genocide.

The court passed the ruling after several sessions conducted in Rubirizi - the scene of most of his crimes.

Rutayisire was a close friend to Maj. General Augustin Bizimungu, a former Chief-of - Staff of the genocidal army, who is on trial at the UN mandated International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) in Arusha, Tanzania.

The court found Rutayisire guilty of providing guns to Interahamwe militia to kill Tutsis in Rubirizi area, where he was residing.

Witnesses testified that Rutayisire handed over one Verediane Mugorewera, a resident in the area, to marauding Interahamwe militia.

Mugorewera's husband, Gerald Karumeyi, was also killed in the Genocide, the court heard.

Rutayisire told the court that Bizimungu was his good friend, and that at one point during the Genocide, the two traveled in a military helicopter to pick money from Gitarama where the genocidal regime had relocated.

At the height of Genocide, the then interim government relocated to Gitarama as the liberation army of Rwanda Patriotic Army (RPA) advanced towards the capital.

He denied having visited B.G.M. Rubirizi College in Kanombe, where Tutsis were hiding but several area witnesses pinned him, saying he was seen together with Interhamwe herding many Tutsis to an unknown destination.

One witness, Papius Mbarekeyende, who was Rutayisire's neighbour during the Genocide, testified that the accused chaired several meetings aimed at killing Tutsis.

Mbarekeyende told court that since Rutayisire was not among those hunted and was powerful in the area, many Tutsis went to his home for protection, but instead, he handed them over to be killed.

"Rutayisire worked with the Genocidal regime to arrest Tutsis perceived to be working with the RPF," another witness, Joseph Habimana, said.

Judges convicted Rutayisire, saying he had failed to defend himself. Throughout the hearing, Rutayisire kept saying that he was being framed.

One witness, Karekezi Amuli, a former leader of Biryogo Sector, Kigali, testified that he and Rutayisire organized several meetings to kill Tutsis in Rubirizi. Karekezi was convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment.

Karekezi said that Rutayisire, together with other senior Kigali leaders, were involved in the mass killings of alleged RPF accomplices who had been arrested in early 90s and paraded in Nyamirambo stadium.

"I saw him at Nyamirambo stadium where Tutsis were being tortured. He is just denying to save himself, but inside his heart, he knows the truth," Karekezi explained.

The court had last month convicted Rutayisire and sentenced him to life imprisonment in absentia but he contested the ruling.

He petitioned the National Gacaca president to have his case heard again in his presence. The same court on Tuesday upheld the earlier decision.

2. Peace keeping/ Conflict Resolution and Security matters

Rwanda: Ntaganda, Co-Accused Appear Before Court

The New Times

Kigali — the trial of Bernard Ntaganda, the leader of a faction of Parti Social (PS) Imberakuri political party, and 8 others accused of threatening state security and organizing an illegal demonstration, among other charges, resumed yesterday at Nyarugenge Intermediate Court.

Bernard Ntaganda and eight others were rounded up by police on the June 24 as they planned to carryout a demonstration without permission from authorities.

All the accused pleaded not guilty to the charges and are seeking bail.

Prosecution insisted that Ntaganda, who is also facing attempted murder charges for allegedly attempting to assassinate his rival, Christine Mukabunani, and his co-accused, are facing serious criminal charges and should be provisionally detained as the case continues.

Theobald Mutarambirwa, Alice Muhirwa, FDU-Inkingi's treasurer as well as Sylvain Sibomana, the Secretary General, are accused along with Ntaganda, of organizing an illegal protest.

Others include Theogene Muhayeyezu, a lawyer, Martin Ntavuka an FDU member, Jean Baptiste Icyitonderwa, a student of KIST and member of PS Imberakuri and Sylvere Mwizerwa.

The court also heard that dangerous objects were seized from Ntaganda's office and will be used as evidence to prove that Ntaganda was plotting to harm people. He denies the charges.

The hearing proceeds today.

Rwanda: Peacekeepers Mark Rwanda Liberation Anniversary

The New Times

The United Nations — African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID), on Sunday, marked the 16th anniversary of Rwanda's liberation.

The event, which brought together UNAMID staff and other delegates, was held at UNAMID Super Camp, El Fasher in Darfur, Sudan.

Speaking during the celebrations, the UNAMID Force Commander, Lt Gen Patrick Nyamvumba, said that the Day signified the sovereignty of Rwanda and the dignity of the its people.

He said that the 3200 Rwandan peacekeepers troops in Darfur and several other foreign peacekeeping missions the country is taking part in are a testimony of the resilience of the Rwandan people.

He urged the peacekeepers to keep up the commitment and discipline in their current mission.

Gen. Nyamvumba also hailed the UNAMID head, Prof. Ibrahim Gambari, for his advocacy against the Genocide at the United Nations as the then Nigerian Permanent Representative. Gambari was among the foreigners who, on July 4, received medals for their outstanding contribution in the fight against Genocide.

National Mourning Declared for Victims of Congo Explosion

VOA

President Kabila has declared a national period of mourning after a tanker explosion left more than 200 dead in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Flags around the Kinshasa flew at half staff after President Joseph Kabila of the Democratic Republic of the Congo declared two days of national mourning for victims. Mr. Kabila has flown to the site of the explosion to console families of the victims killed and observe the humanitarian relief efforts.

The International Committee of the Red Cross estimates that more than 230 bystanders were killed and 180 injured after a tanker carrying oil crashed Saturday near Sange, about 20 kilometers west of the Burundian border.

According to local reports, the truck overturned while trying to avoid traffic and began spilling oil. Though the injured driver was pulled to safety, the tanker spilled fuel for nearly an hour, attracting nearby residents who were lined up to tap the oil when the tank exploded.

The blast also spread to buildings across the street, killing and injuring residents who had gathered to watch the World Cup in makeshift shacks.

Relief efforts are being coordinated between various international organizations, such as the United Nations and the International Committee of the Red Cross, and the government in Kinshasa.

According to a spokesperson for the U.N. Stabilization Mission in Congo, Madnodje Mounoubai, the United Nations has provided ambulances and security for the relief efforts as well as helicopter transport to hospitals in either Bukavu or Uvira for the most severely injured.

Mounoubai said Congolese authorities are providing assistance wherever possible, but added the extreme nature of the blast has overwhelmed local capacities for assistance. "Nobody was prepared for this. In addition to that, medical facilities either in Bukavu or Uvira, they are not equipped to deal with injuries of this type," said Mounoubai. "We do not have any burn units in this area. So, obviously, they were not prepared for this."

The Congolese Red Cross has been providing medical supplies and body bags to relief workers as well as helping identify the remains of badly burned victims.

Many of the dead who cannot be identified have been buried in mass graves near the crash site. President Kabila is scheduled to visit the burial sites during his tour of the region.

3. Social issues/ Human Rights

Red Cross Assists Thousands of Displaced in Remote Area of DRC

Lisa Schlein

VOA

The International Committee of the Red Cross has begun the distribution of seed, agricultural and fishing tools to some 35,000 people in Equateur province, a remote region in northern Democratic Republic of Congo. The aid will allow tens of thousands of people in the town of Dongo and the surrounding area to plant their crops in time for the next harvest in November.

Almost the entire town of Dongo, some 100,000 people, fled ethnic clashes that erupted in October. The violence between rival tribal groups erupted over farming and fishing rights.

Most people fled to the neighboring Republic of the Congo and the Central African Republic. But, tens of thousands have remained in the DRC and several thousands have returned to Dongo to try to pick up their lives as best they can.

Red Cross Spokeswoman, Nicole Engelbrecht, says both the returnees and the displaced are in dire need of help.

"They did not have the possibility to plant seeds due to the violence that broke out there in October of last year," she said. "So, they have a hard time providing for themselves. A lot of the infrastructure such as schools, health centers and the markets were partly destroyed by looters over the past few months. So, it is really a difficult situation that, indeed, very few people know about and not very many talk about."

Engelbrecht says many people would like to return to Dongo, but are discouraged from doing so because of the damage done to their homes.

She says it is very important to help people reconstruct their houses. So, the ICRC plans to employ local workmen to repair 1,000 houses.

"We pay people to construct the houses, maybe people from other families who do not have the same problems," she said. "And, then they on their behalf, they can invest the money they earn for something else they might need. So, this whole system boosts the local economy. There are two groups of people who benefit from reconstructing their houses. The people who will eventually live in them again and those who are paid for rebuilding the houses."

The Red Cross seed distribution operation will benefit 25,000 people. The organization also will provide 2,000 fishermen with fishing equipment to replace that which was looted so they can resume their trade.

Besides this, Englebrecht says the Red Cross is working to restore contact between family members who became separated during the violence.

She says two children already have been reunited with their parents, and seven others living in the neighboring Republic of the Congo are waiting to rejoin their families in the DRC.

She says the ICRC currently is trying to track down the parents of more than 130 children in Equateur province who became separated from them.

São Tomé tropical island paradise

Afrol News

Our second "secret" African travel destination is the still undiscovered pearl São Tomé, with excellent beaches, lush volcanic rainforest and farms, warm Portuguese architecture, Creole culture and African hospitality.

Fond of tropical beaches, exotic surroundings, a welcoming local community and not too many tourists wandering around? Then you might ask yourself why you have not discovered the island of São Tomé before; and you will want to visit it before the rest of the world inevitably discovers it.

São Tomé hosts the capital with the same name of Africa's smallest state São Tomé and Príncipe, consisting of only two volcanic islands in the Gulf of Guinea just north of the equator. A former Portuguese colony transferred into a developing democracy, the country with a GDP smaller than many companies is too tiny to hit world media, or even to market its great tourism potentials.

While Príncipe is mountainous and very sparsely populated, São Tomé island has its non-active volcano providing it with a spectacular landscape, tropical rainforests and cocoa plantations making it an evergreen, and just enough inhabitants to provide some urban feeling and services without making it crowded or stressed.

And then there are the beach Colorful colonial style houses still dominate the centre of São Tomé es, of course, some of which have beautiful black volcanic sands. You don't even have to leave the capital to swim in the inner African corner of the Atlantic. São Tomé city has a charming colonial, somewhat run-down beach promenade, with rocks, palms and majestic trees providing shadow to the city beach.

Leaving the capital, you will find the best beaches just a few kilometres to the north at Praia das Conchas. The white sands, perfectly clear waters, coconut palms and occasional fisherman in their dugout canoes amount to a tropical paradise postcard dream come true.

But there are also a number of superb beaches to the south of São Tomé, many more easily reached than Praia da Conchas. And a beach hopping excursion to the south is a good way to learn to know the island and escape from the very few tourists you meet in the capital.

On an afternoon off the beach, the charming town of São Tomé is well worth walking around. Among friendly, helpful and welcoming São Toméans, there is never a long way to a refreshment

Walking in São Tomé, you will be delighted by the robust, warm and colourful colonial architecture along with wooden houses, all supervised by the old Portuguese fortress and the magnificent cathedral. A rather sleepy atmosphere secures the right holiday modus.

Culturally, the island is very homogenous to be an African state. Portuguese from 1493 to 1975, and with a population mostly being descendent of sugar and cocoa plantation slaves brought from the African mainland, a Portuguese-African Creole culture developed over the centuries. In fact, it is a beautiful and pleasant cultural mix with a Latin African flavour.

São Tomé, which soon hopes to become an oil producing nation, is still a poor and agriculturally based society. Infrastructure, also for tourists, is poor, also meaning you should be careful regarding

Fresh fish offered on the beach of São Tomé

But if you like the genuine and rural touch to your tropical paradise, São Tomé still provides this. And if you can be persuaded to leave the wonderful beaches, the wonderful green landscapes leading up to Pico de São Tomé (2024 metres) a well worth one or several trips.

What looks like dense jungle from below, is to a large degree farmlands with cocoa and coffee production, including small scale farms and large estates. There are some few trekking routes, including one to the panoramic Casa de Repouso some 15 kilometres outside the capital.

You can also find guides taking you into the real rainforests of the more remote interior of the island, giving you the real expedition feeling. Here, along with native wildlife, you come across spectacular waterfalls, dramatic views and the occasional bushmeat hunter.

And after an expedition into the mountain jungle, maybe the surprising nightlife of São Tomé may be a good conclusion of your trip? São Toméans know how to party till late in the

Cocoa harvest in São Tomé's apparent rainforest, which turn out to be farmlands, night, and many visitors have fallen in love with local beauties of both sexes.

Have you decided to give São Tomé a try? Usually, the easiest way to reach the island state is from Portugal, where there mostly are direct flights. Also, there tend to be flights from Douala (Cameroon), Libreville (Gabon), Malabo (Equatorial Guinea) and some other African capitals.

And before you book a flight, consider the climatic variations in São Tomé. The price for a rainforest is much rain - which is however bearable in this warm climate. The heaviest rains are from June to September, but there are occasional rains all year round.

This article is one in an afrol News series dedicated to the many genuine and "undiscovered" travel destinations in Africa, published daily throughout the (northern) summer of 2010.

Congo-Kinshasa: ICC Suspends Trial of Warlord Accused of Recruiting Child Soldiers

The New Times

The International Criminal Court (ICC) today suspended proceedings in the case of a Congolese warlord accused of recruiting child soldiers, saying that prosecutors have refused orders to disclose information to his defence.

Thomas Lubanga Dyilo, the founder and leader of the Union of Congolese Patriots in the Ituri region of the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), faces two counts of war crimes: conscripting and enlisting child soldiers into the military wing of his group and then using them to participate in hostilities between September 2002 and August 2003.

His trial began at The Hague, where the ICC is based, in January 2009.

The Court's Trial Chamber I ordered to stay the proceedings "considering that the fair trial of the accused is no longer possible due to non-implementation of the Chamber's orders by the Prosecution."

The judges had ordered the Office of the Prosecutor to confidentially disclose to the defence the names and other necessary identifying information of "intermediary 143," according to a news release issued by the ICC.

The Trial Chamber considered that "in order for the Chamber to ensure that the accused receives a fair trial, it is necessary that its orders, decisions and rulings are respected, unless and until they are overturned on appeal, or suspended by order of the Court."

Established by the Rome Statute of 1998, the ICC is an independent, permanent court that tries persons accused of the most serious crimes of international concern - namely genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes.

The UN Security Council, the ICC Prosecutor or a State Party to the Court can initiate any proceedings, and the ICC only acts when countries themselves are unwilling or unable to investigate or prosecute.

4. Elections

Rwanda: NEC Confirms Four Presidential Candidates

The New Times

Kigali — President Paul Kagame (RPF), Prosper Higiho (PL), Dr Jean Damascene Ntawukuriryayo (PSD) and Dr Alvera Mukabaramba (PPC) have been given the green light to contest in the August 10 presidential elections.

The four presidential candidates were announced, yesterday, by the Chairman of the National Electoral Commission (NEC), Prof. Chrysologue Karangwa, at the commission's head office in Kimihurura, Kigali.

"I am pleased to announce to Rwandans that the Commission, in accordance to the Law that governs elections, and after scrutinising all the documents that were presented by the four politicians, all the four have been given the go-ahead to contest for the Presidency," declared Karangwa.

Addressing the media, Prof. Karangwa said the Commission did not receive any candidatures from individual aspirants.

The Commission received candidatures from June 24 to July 2, 2010.

Karangwa said that campaigns will kick off on July 20, and end on August 8, a day before the elections.

Meanwhile, NEC Executive Secretary, Charles Munyaneza, announced that the Government provided up to Rwf7.4 billion towards the election budget, which is equivalent to 83 percent of the total bill.

He said the Commission was comfortable with the available funds since "we have been able to raise Rwf1.3 billion from development partners."

"I believe the remaining balance, which is less than Rwf100 million, cannot prevent us from executing our duties as expected," he said.

During the 2008 parliamentary elections, the Government contributed about 62 percent of the budget, with the remaining coming from development partners.

Rwanda: Journalists Association to Monitor Election Coverage

The New Times

Kigali — The Rwanda Journalists Association (ARJ), will for the first time, monitor the media's coverage of the forthcoming presidential elections.

According to a statement from ARJ, the objective of the monitoring is to assess the media's performance in terms of fairness, transparency and independence during the election period.

ARJ President, Gaspard Safari, said that six election coverage monitors have already been identified and are currently undergoing training in preparation for the exercise. He added that they are all final year journalism students from the Rwanda National University (NUR) and the Catholic Institute of Kabgayi.

"The monitors will evaluate how the Rwandan media applies the principles of balanced, fair and ethical reporting," Safari said.

The team will be coordinated by Peacemaker Mbungiramihigo, a journalism lecturer and former reporter, who is also a member of ARJ Executive Committee.

Safari explained that the monitors will produce a report that will be used as a reference document on how the Rwandan media covered the elections.

The process will be facilitated by a grant of \$14,466 (about Rwf8.2 million) from the Rwanda Media Strengthening Project (RMSP).

Rwanda's Kagame to Face 3 Challengers in Election

VOA

Rwandan President Paul Kagame will face three challengers in next month's presidential election.

Rwanda's electoral commission said Wednesday that four candidates, including the incumbent, are cleared to run in the August 9 ballot.

Deputy Parliament Speaker Jean Damascene will run as candidate of the Social Democratic Party. Senator Prosper Higiro will represent the Liberal Party. The Prosperity and Concord Party put forward the only female contestant, Alvera Mukabaramba.

The commission says some people who were expected to run, including opposition figure Victoire Ingabire, did not submit applications.

Critics have accused President Kagame of stifling opposition and freedom of expression ahead of the poll. Rwandan authorities arrested Ingabire in April and accused her of working with rebels to destabilize the country.

The presidential election will be the second since the 1994 genocide, in which Hutu extremists killed an estimated 800,000 ethnic Tutsis and moderate Hutus.

President Kagame and his ruling Rwanda Patriotic Front won the first election in 2003.

The official Rwanda News Agency says the candidates will have 20 days to campaign, beginning July 20. It says the election commission has set aside the next two weeks for any issues and complaints it may have to rectify before the election.

Rwanda: Editor Arrested After Criticizing Kagame Government

Committee to Protect Journalists (New York)

Press release

Police in Rwanda arrested the editor of a private newspaper on Thursday in connection with a series of articles critical of the government, according to local journalists.

Agnès Uwimana was taken into custody in the capital, Kigali, over allegations that her Kinyarwanda-language weekly Umurabyo had published stories "inciting the public to disobey," "articles related to division and ethnicity," and "rumors that can cause disturbance in the country," Rwandan National Police spokesman Eric Kayiranga told CPJ today. Kayiranga said police acted in the public interest and would take Uwimana to court next week.

Umurabyo, which rose to prominence in April following the government's closure of leading private papers Umuseso and Umugizi, had in recent editions raised questions about a number of sensitive topics, including last month's murder of journalist Jean-Léonard Rugambage, the fallout between President Paul Kagame and two now-exiled military leaders, and reports alleging lavish government spending on luxury jets, according to local journalists. One story criticizing the government was headlined, "The Hammer Has Begun Killing the Fly," a reference to April remarks in which Kagame declared that, "if necessary, we will kill the fly with a hammer." Kagame was discussing generals who fled after being accused of involvement in grenade attacks earlier this year.

"Once again, Rwandan authorities invoke national security and the legacy of the 1994 genocide to silence one of the few dissenting voices in the shrinking independent Rwandan press," said CPJ Africa Advocacy Coordinator Mohamed Keita. "We call on authorities to release Agnès Uwimana immediately; she should not go to prison for expressing her views a month before presidential elections."

Uwimana had been imprisoned in 2007-08, serving a one-year sentence on charges of ethnic divisionism and libel after she published an op-ed on the topic of ethnic violence in Rwanda, according to CPJ research. Last month, Rwanda's Media High Council Board Chairman Arthur Asimwe accused Uwimana of publishing "defamatory articles and falsehoods" in a story suggesting that all Rwandans were both victims and perpetrators of the 1994 genocide, according to news reports.

Only a handful of independent newspapers, including Rushyashya, Umusingi, and Gasabo, have continued to publish in Rwanda under increasing self-censorship, according to local journalists.

Rwanda: Police Warn Ingabire and Co. against Slander

The New Times

Kigali — Rwanda national police has warned the so-called Permanent Consultative Council of Opposition Parties in Rwanda (PCC) against making false accusations that opposition politicians are being tortured.

Police issued the warning, yesterday, after it emerged that nine people, who were arrested for illegally organizing a protest, are claiming to have been tortured by police, accusations the Police has strongly denied.

Police warned the group after a thorough medical examination report indicated that Alice Muhirwa, the treasurer of FDU-Inkingi who allegedly collapsed during court proceedings on Wednesday, was in good shape and did not have any signs of torture as she claimed.

According to Police Spokesperson, Supt. Eric Kayiranga, Muhirwa, was discharged last evening after doctors from the Kigali Central Teaching Hospital (CHUK) and Kacyiru Police Hospital found "not a single medical condition", leading to the conclusion that she had faked the condition.

"All examinations were conducted by medical experts and they revealed that she had no serious medical condition. There is no internal bleeding as a result of torture as she claims, no heart condition, no hypertension, no high blood pressure - nothing," Kayiranga said.

The Spokesperson added that several tests, including radiography and X-rays, were conducted but there was no sign of torture or sickness as a result of detention.

According to the Police, the findings of the medical tests prompted doctors to look into her medical history and it was found that it is not the first time Muhirwa has faked a medical condition.

Records held by police indicate that in February 2001 Muhirwa, a daughter of a one Maj. Muhirwa an Ex-FAR soldier, while she was a student at the National University of

Rwanda, disappeared for two days and claimed that she had been kidnapped and raped multiple times by three people, but medical reports indicated that she hadn't been raped at all.

It is also said that she later confessed to having lied and was consequently dismissed from NUR for the incident and having been found to be promoting the genocide ideology.

Police warned that the torture allegations are "pure lies only meant to tarnish and defame the government and the Police in particular".

"We are servants of the citizens and we proudly serve their interests in accordance with law. We are a professional and transparent institution meant to cater for and protect human rights. We therefore do not engage in barbaric acts of torture," Kayiranga said.