



COALITION
BURUNDAISE
DES DÉFENSEURS
DES DROITS DE
L'HOMME
CBDDH

Burundian Coalition of Human Rights Defenders(CBDDH) Statement 15th Commemoration of the assassination of Ernest Manirumva

1. During the night of 08 to 09 April 2009, Ernest Manirumva, human rights defender and former Vice-President of the Organisation de Lutte contre la Corruption et les Malversations Economiques (OLUCOME) was brutally murdered and his lifeless body was found at his residence in Mutanga Sud-Bujumbura.
2. Three commissions of inquiry were set up with the mission of discovering the perpetrators and motive behind this crime. The American FBI assisted the Burundian investigation teams. The report of the 3rd commission called for certain personalities to be interviewed and confronted in order to uncover the truth, and converges with the conclusions of the FBI, which recommended that DNA tests be carried out on some high-ranking members of the police and the National Intelligence Service, and compared with the fingerprints found at the crime scene. This request was never fulfilled..
3. Since April 2009, civil society organizations belonging to the "Justice for Ernest Manirumva" campaign have consistently called for light to be shed on this assassination and for the perpetrators to be brought to justice, but they have been demonized and abused as a result.
4. Fifteen years after the assassination, no light has yet been shed on Ernest Manirumva's murderers. A sham trial has taken place and scapegoats have been convicted, ignoring the conclusions of expert commissions.
5. To demand justice for Ernest Manirumva is a right and a duty on which human rights defenders can never give up. Ernest Manirumva was murdered in the performance of his civic duty. Indeed, he was murdered because he was carrying out an official investigation into the misappropriation of weapons ordered and paid for by the Ministry of Public Security, but which never reached the army and police stocks. His investigations led him to a trail of arms trafficking by high-ranking members of the police and the National Intelligence Service (SNR). Shortly before his assassination, death threats were made against him and some members and employees of OLUCOME, urging them to abandon their investigations and follow-up on on some

- cases concerning the embezzlement of public funds and the irregular sale of State property. Ernest Manirumva did not give up despite the threats and paid with his life.
6. On May 22, 2012, the Bujumbura Court of Appeal handed down an iniquitous judgment, through ruling 402 without taking into consideration the results of the investigations. The Public Prosecutor's Office did not appeal. In 2013, the president of OLUCOME lodged a cassation appeal on this case with the Supreme Court. Hearings scheduled on the sly and postponed to later dates were not followed up. Since September 2014, the Cassation Chamber has never scheduled a hearing on this case. According to the information in our possession, the trial for the assassination of Ernest Manirumva is closed and his file cannot be found at the Supreme Court registry and other jurisdictions.
 7. On this day when we commemorate 15 years since his assassination, we pay tribute to our dearly departed colleague and human rights defender Ernest Manirumva, and the CBDDH requests:

To the Government of Burundi:

- ✓ To arrest, try and punish in accordance with the law the murderers of Ernest Manirumva, based on the report of the 3rd Commission of Inquiry and the recommendations of the FBI.
- ✓ To proceed with the promulgation of the law on the protection of human rights defenders, and to cease all forms of harassment and violence against them.

To human rights defenders and the people of Burundi

- ✓ To Monitor all acts of economic embezzlement and abuse of power, bearing in mind that injustice will not last forever, but that sooner or later people will have to answer for their actions.
- ✓ To stand firm in the face of threats, to remain united and to continue to hold those in power to account, because light will eventually shine at the end of the tunnel, no matter how long the struggle.

To development partners

- ✓ To ask the Government of Burundi to report on the application of international human rights Conventions to ensure that the support provided does not constitute a factor of human rights violation.

Signed on 08 April 2024

Eulalie NIBIZI



Executive Director of the CBDDH