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| AFR 16/8534/2024 - Burundi - Date: 18 September 2024 | | |
| URGENT ACTION |  | UA 082/24 |
| Jailed doctor needs urgent medical care | | |
| BURUNDI | | |

Dr Christophe Sahabo, a Burundian doctor, was arrested on 1 April 2022 over a dispute regarding the management of Kira hospital and has remained in detention ever since. On 10 September, he vomited and collapsed during a trial hearing. He was admitted to hospital, but transferred back to Ruyigi Prison on 12 September, while still undergoing treatment. His medical condition is serious and potentially life-threatening if he does not receive urgent medical attention. Family members were refused access to visit him in prison on 14 September and were not allowed to bring him medicines. The authorities must immediately allow him unfettered access to all necessary medical care.

Dr Christophe Sahabo, managing director of Kira Hospital in Bujumbura, was arrested in April 2022, alongside Jean-David Pillot, chair of the hospital’s board of directors. The latter was released after one night in detention, but Christophe Sahabo remained in detention for several days without access to his family or lawyers of his choosing. He was detained in a National Intelligence Service (SNR) cell where he spent more than 30 days before being presented to a magistrate and transferred to Mpimba prison. On 29 September 2022, he was transferred to Ruyigi prison, approximately 160km from Bujumbura where his case is being heard. His family and lawyers alleged that he was put under pressure and forced to resign from his role at Kira Hospital over unsubstantiated claims of fraud, money laundering and forging documents. One of his lawyers said that a recent financial audit, commissioned by Kira Hospital interim officials, found no wrongdoing on Christophe Sahabo’s account.

On 27 September 2022, his brother and lawyer were arrested and accused by the prosecutor general of forging the minutes of the Kira Hospital’s general assembly meeting that reinstated Christophe Sahabo as director. His lawyer was released on 7 October 2022 after recusing herself from the case. His brother was also released the same day.

TAKE ACTION

* Write an appeal in your own words or use the **model letter** on **page 2**.
* Please take action before **16 March** 2025.
* Preferred language: **French**. You can also write in your own language.
* **INFO POSTAGE**: Post delivery is possible to almost all countries. Please check at the Swiss Post whether letters are currently being delivered to the destination country.   
  If not, please send by email, fax or social media and/or via the embassy with the request for forwarding to the named person. Thank you !

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| APPEALS TO | COPIES TO |
| Mme Domine Banyankimbona Ministre de la Justice BP 1880 Bujumbura Burundi  **Emails:** [**minjustice.burundi@gmail.com**](mailto:minjustice.burundi@gmail.com)**;** [**infos@burundi.justice.gov.bi**](mailto:infos@burundi.justice.gov.bi) Twitter/X: @MiniJustice\_BDI | Ambassade de la République du Burundi Rue de Lausanne 44 1201 Genève  Fax: 022 732 77 34 E-mail: [mission.burundi217@gmail.com](mailto:mission.burundi217@gmail.com) |
| ⭢ **Social media guidance** see online: [amnesty.ch](https://www.amnesty.ch) 🔍**UA 082/24** | |

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Mme Domine Banyankimbona  
Ministre de la Justice  
BP 1880  
Bujumbura  
Burundi

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Dear Minister,

**I am alarmed by the poor state of health of Dr Christophe Sahabo, who has been detained since 1 April 2022. He needs urgent medical attention.**

On 10 September, Dr Christophe Sahabo attended a trial hearing at Muha High Court in Bujumbura. The hearing was suspended after he vomited and collapsed in court. He was admitted to hospital where he underwent tests and began treatment. Despite a recommendation to maintain him under medical observation for several days, Dr Christophe Sahabo was transferred back to Ruyigi Prison on the evening of 12 September – a journey of approximately 160 km. His family members were refused access to visit him in prison on 14 September and were not allowed to hand over medication they had brought for him.

At Amnesty International’s request, two independent doctors reviewed Dr Christophe Sahabo’s medical notes and test results. They confirmed that his condition was potentially life-threatening and that he re-quires urgent medical attention.

The deliberate denial of medical care to prisoners has potentially fatal consequences and may constitute a violation to the right to life. The authorities’ deliberate denial of health care, causing severe pain and suffering, amounts to torture and other ill-treatment under international law. Under Burundian law (Article 33 of the 2017 law on the penitentiary system), detainees who are unwell have the right to be transferred to a medical institution for specialized care that is not available at the prison on the recommendation of the prison doctor.

**In light of the above, I urge you to ensure that Dr Christophe Sahabo immediately receives appropriate medical attention and has unfettered access to his family and lawyers.**

Yours sincerely,

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**Copie**

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