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**Press Release – March 1, 2025**

**Condemnation of the CNC's injunction to withdraw the interview with Mr. Gratién Rukindikiza**

The Burundian Union of Journalists (UBJ) strongly condemns the decision of the National Communication Council (CNC) ordering the newspaper Iwacu to withdraw the interview with Mr. Gratién Rukindikiza, a former army officer and security issues analyst.

This injunction represents an unacceptable infringement on press freedom and freedom of expression, fundamental rights that must be protected in any democratic society.

"Censoring the newspaper Iwacu is depriving the Burundian population of an essential debate on issues that directly concern them. We cannot accept that the truth be stifled under the pretext of controlling information," declares Alexandre Niyungeko, President of the UBJ.

"The freedom of the press is a pillar of democracy. We must protect journalists' right to inform without fear of repression. This decision by the CNC only strengthens our determination to defend this freedom," he added.

We are convinced that the right to information is essential for the proper functioning of a democracy. Journalists have a duty to report the facts and give a voice to experts on matters of public interest. Censoring these voices only hinders democratic debate and undermines public trust in institutions.

The UBJ calls on the CNC to reconsider its decision and to respect the right of the media to inform the population freely. We also urge all civil society actors, journalists, and citizens to mobilize to stand up and defend freedom of expression and to oppose any form of censorship.

The government of Burundi must respect democratic principles and guarantee a free media environment in which diverse voices can express themselves without fear of repression.