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In Rwanda, radio presenter detained without charge

New York, May 18, 2012 – Authorities in Rwanda have imprisoned a radio presenter without charge since April 24 for allegedly uttering a phrase deemed offensive to the survivors and victims of the 1994 genocide, according to local reports and local journalists.

Habarugira Epaphrodite, a reporter and presenter at Radio Huguka, a community station in Rwanda's second-largest city Gitarama, has been held in pretrial detention in relation to a newscast on April 22, Eugene Ndekezi, the station's manager, told CPJ.

Ndekezi said the journalist mixed up the Kinyarwanda terms for "victims" with that of "survivors" while reading a public service announcement about local genocide commemoration events during the early morning newscast. The prosecution accused the journalist of implying confusion between genocide survivors and perpetrators, pro-government daily *The New Times* reported.

Ndekezi told CPJ the journalist made a mistake, adding that Epaphrodite had read the same report a day earlier without error. On May 3, a magistrate in Gitarama extended Epaphrodite's detention for 30 days pending further investigation, even though the journalist had accepted the accusations and apologized, Ndekezi said.

"For uttering a word in error, Epaphrodite is being forced to spend more than a month in jail," said CPJ East Africa Consultant Tom Rhodes. "Authorities should release him immediately."

In another case relating to the sensitivity of reporting on genocide, the Supreme Court on April 5 ruled in an appeal by former *Umurabyo* Editor Agnès Uwimana and Sub-Editor

Saidati Mukakibibi, reducing their prison sentences of 17 and seven years to four and three years, respectively. Uwimana and Mukakibibi were originally charged and arrested in July 2010 and then convicted in January 2011 on charges of genocide denial and promoting ethnic division for articles published in the bi-monthly *Umurabyo* tabloid in 2009, according to local journalists. In the appeal, the court cleared charges of genocide denial but upheld the charges of inciting public disorder and defamation of the head of state, local journalists told CPJ.