

Rwanda: Authorities must immediately release Victoire Ingabire

Rwandan authorities must immediately release opposition politician and president of Development and Liberty for All (DALFA-Umurinzi) political party, Victoire Ingabire, Amnesty International said today.

The Rwanda Investigations Bureau (RIB) has linked her arrest in June to alleged subversion for communicating with nine others who were arrested October and December 2021 and are facing charges of attempting to overthrow the government.

Amnesty International also called for the immediate release of the nine. They include eight members of DALFA and Journalist Théoneste Nsengimana. All nine are awaiting the end of their trial which started in November 2024 after three years of pre-trial detention.

Ingabire was arrested at her home in the capital Kigali on 19 June by the RIB. The next day, in a [tweet](#) confirming the arrest, the RIB stated it had launched an investigation against Ingabire, at the request of the Public Prosecutor, linked to the case of the DALFA members arrested in 2021.

Ingabire is accused of, among other charges, “establishing or joining a criminal organization, conspiring to commit crimes against the government, and inciting unrest or disorder among the population.” She has denied these charges. If convicted, she could face up to life in prison. The prosecutor has relied on the testimony of a former aide and voice recordings purporting Ingabire shared ideas on non-violent actions against the government with the group.

“Three months since the arrest of Victoire Ingabire and almost four years since the arrest of nine others, eight of whom are members of Ingabire’s unregistered political party, Rwandan authorities continue to send a clear message that political opposition in the country will not be tolerated,” said Tigere Chagutah, Amnesty International’s Regional Director for East and Southern Africa.

Ingabire remains in detention following a court ruling in July denying her bail on the grounds that she was a flight risk. She was [previously imprisoned in 2010](#) and sentenced to 15 years in prison on charges including “divisionism” but received a presidential pardon in 2018 and was released under conditions requiring monthly check-ins with a local prosecutor and prior authorization before travelling abroad. In 2017, [the African Court on Human and Peoples’ Rights \(AfCHPR\)](#) ruled that Rwanda had violated her rights to freedom of expression and a fair trial.

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Amnesty International documented the case of the eight DALFA members and journalist Théoneste Nsengimana. The prosecutor is seeking a 10-year sentence for the journalist, and for the others, sentences ranging from 20 years to life imprisonment for planning and attending a workshop on peaceful resistance to authoritarian practices. The workshop was based on the book, by Srda Popovic. Amnesty International believes that the charges against them have no legal grounds and violate Rwanda’s Constitution as well as the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights to which the country is a state party.

“Rwanda’s persistent political persecution of those with differing opinions has gone on for too long. Peaceful dissent and the right to freedom of association should not be criminalized. Authorities

must immediately end the authoritarian practices, and facilitate, ensure and uphold media freedom, and the rights to freedom of expression and association for everyone in the country without any reprisals or risk of arrest or judicial harassment,” said Tigere Chagutah.

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Background

Victoire Ingabire returned to Rwanda from exile in the Netherlands in January 2010 to participate in the country’s presidential elections. Ingabire was barred from the election and arrested on charges including “genocide ideology” and “divisionism”.

On 10 September 2025, a European Union Parliament [resolution](#) said the arrest is part of a broader crackdown on political opposition, journalists, and civil society. Since 2017, at least five members of Ingabire’s former party, FDU-Inkingi, have died or forcibly disappeared. The opposition, civil society and media operate under severe restrictions on their rights to freedom of expression and association, alongside threats, arbitrary detention, prosecution on trumped-up charges, killings, and enforced disappearances. Independent civil society and the media also face attacks, intimidation, harassment and other reprisals for their work.