

PRESS RELEASE – OCTOBER 14, 2026

Marking IngabireDay – International Day for the release of political prisoners and prisoners of conscience, and for the rule of law and democracy in Rwanda



#IngabireDay2026

Contact :

IngabireDay Collective
ingabireday@gmail.com

Europe : +33 662 34 60 94

+32 472444812

North America : +1 450 933 274

Australia : +61 411 095 260

RWANDA: Treason, divisionism... accusations wielded as a lethal political weapon against critical voices.

On October 14, 2026, for the thirteenth time, Rwandans, friends of Rwanda, and human rights defenders are marking the day dedicated to supporting the release of political prisoners and prisoners of conscience, and to upholding the rule of law and democracy in Rwanda. On this occasion, the IngabireDay Collective¹ denounces a spiral of terror, injustice, and human rights violations in Rwanda. For several years, opposition figures, journalists, and critical voices have been imprisoned, accused of treason, endangering state security, "divisionism," and more. Human rights organizations denounce the political nature of these accusations.

Victoire Ingabire, still imprisoned: an unjust political trial

She was released under diplomatic pressure in September 2018, after spending eight years in prison but was imprisoned again on June 19, 2025. She is facing unjust prosecution, allegedly for treason, plotting to overthrow the government, and disseminating information hostile to the government.

The so-called "October 14" prisoners, accused of reading a book...

Ms. Ingabire is being held alongside the so-called "October 14" prisoners, who have been in detention for the last five years without trial. Their "crime is to": reading Srdja Popovic's book, * How to topple a dictator when you are alone, very small, and without weapons" . The group includes Claudine Uwimana, Sylvain Sibomana, Alexis Rucubanganya, Marcel Nahimana, Emmanuel Masengesho, Alphonse Mutabazi, Hamad Hagenimana, Jean Claude Ndayishimiye, and journalist Théoneste Nsengimana.

Political prisoners and prisoners of conscience abound, with some having been incarcerated for over 16 years

Many other political prisoners or prisoners of conscience have been languishing behind bars for years, including Déogratias Mushayidi, Yvonne Idamange Iryamugwiza, Rachid Hakuzimana, Christopher Kayumba, Théophile Ntirutwa, Dr. Christophe Mpozayo, Dr. Joseph Nkusi, Prof. Léopold Munyakazi, as well as journalists Dieudonné Niyonsenga (alias Cyuma Hassan) and Phocas Ndayizera, among many others.

¹ The IngabireDay Collective is made up of several organizations : Fondation Victoire Pour la Paix | RifDP Canada | RifDP Belgium | RifDP France | RifDP Netherlands | Communauté Rwandaise de Lyon | Friends of Victoire | Jambo asbl | AJDHD | Amahoriwacu Campaign.

The International Day for the Release of Political Prisoners and Prisoners of Conscience, for the Rule of Law and Democracy in Rwanda, observed every 14 October, is commonly known as "Ingabire Day". The name refers to Mrs. Victoire Ingabire Umuhoza who, like Mandela, has already spent several years of her life in prison because of her steadfast commitment to respect for human rights and democracy.

In 2026, the situation deteriorated further, with a death in custody and the imprisonment of additional journalists

- On May 6, 2026, Aimable Karasira—a former University lecturer, a genocide survivor, government critic, and close to Ms. Ingabire—died in prison on the very day he was due to be released after five years of detention. The Rwandan regime announced that he had died of a drug overdose. Human Rights Watch is calling for an independent and transparent investigation. This death echoes those of other critical voices held in the regime's jails, such as singer Kizito Mihigo (February 2020)—whose death the regime claimed was a suicide—and rapper Joshua Tuyishime, alias Jay Polly (September 2021). To date, no independent investigation has been conducted to shed light on these deaths.
- In May 2026, two young journalists, Augustin Nsanzimana and Emmanuel Niyonshuti, who work for the YouTube channel *Imbarutso ya Demokarasi*, were imprisoned. Clémentine de Montjoye, a researcher at Human Rights Watch, lamented the situation, stating that these detentions are part of an ongoing repression against those who expose government failures, members of the opposition, particularly those linked to imprisoned opposition figure Victoire Ingabire, leading opposition figure who now in prison, and against all those who challenge government official narratives and run the risk of reprisals.

The IngabireDay collective calls for:

- The release of Ms. Victoire Ingabire and the "October 14" prisoners;
- The release of all individuals detained for political reasons or because of their opinions;
- The opening of independent investigations into the deaths in custody of Kizito Mihigo, Aimable Karasira, and Joshua Tuyishime (alias Jay Polly);
- Respect for the presumption of innocence and, in the event of prosecution, a guarantee of fair trials.

We call upon the international community to exert the necessary diplomatic pressure on the Kigali regime to ensure respect for human rights in Rwanda. The RPF regime must stop using national security as a pretext to criminalize dissenting voices and must cease wielding accusations of treason, threats to state security, or "divisionism" as political weapons to crush any opposition or opinion that differs from its own.

IngabireDay 2026: How to take action in Rwanda and elsewhere?

As with every year, IngabireDay 2026 will feature various activities aimed at raising awareness and mobilizing the public regarding the state of human rights and democracy in Rwanda. Outside Rwanda, online conferences, public statements, and social media campaigns will be organized.

Inside the country, Rwandans who, because of the climate of terror, cannot take any visible action without exposing themselves to the wrath of the regime will **observe two minutes of silence on 14 October at 12:00** (Kigali time, i.e. 10:00 GMT/UTC). Everyone who cares about justice and peace, wherever they are in the world, is invited to join Rwandans in observing this moment of silence, devoting a thought or a prayer to political prisoners and prisoners of conscience, and to all other victims of the injustices of the totalitarian RPF regime.

Other events are scheduled for later dates throughout October. In Lyon, a gala in support of political prisoners is planned for October 16, 2026. **In Brussels**, an evening of solidarity and support for Rwanda's political prisoners and prisoners of conscience will take place on **October 24, 2026**, starting at 6:00 PM.

Justice will prevail.

Done in Brussels, October 14, 2026