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BMA

Mr. Epimeni Bapfinda
Burundi Ambassador to the UK
Burundian Embassy in London

Sent via email to burundi.london@gmail.com

24th October 2024

Dear Ambassador

Re. The removal and withholding of life-sustaining medical treatment from Dr. Christophe Sahabo

We are writing to you, on behalf of the British Medical Association (BMA), to express our concern regarding the withholding of medical attention and treatment from Dr Christophe Sahabo. Dr Sahabo should be granted access to medical care that is necessary to sustain his life and improve his health. As fellow medical professionals of Dr Sahabo, we urge you to remind the relevant authorities that they are required to provide this treatment and care under international human rights law.

We understand that Dr Sahabo was abruptly taken from hospital and returned to Ruyigi Prison on 12 September 2024, despite still undergoing life-saving treatment. It is our understanding that he has not been provided with further treatment through the dispensaries or infirmaries within the prison, and that requests from family members to visit and to bring him medicines on 14 September were refused.

We note that two independent doctors have visited Dr Sahabo and confirmed that his condition was potentially life threatening – reiterating that urgent medical attention was necessary.

Under International Human Rights treaties, of which Burundi is a signatory, the right to health is recognised as a clear human right. This is noted in both the International Convention on Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). To deny necessary healthcare to Dr Sahabo is a clear violation of his human rights.

Chief executive officers: Neeta Major & Rachel Podolak

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We urge you to ensure that the relevant authorities allow Dr Sahabo to be provided with appropriate medical attention, treatment, and care – including potential transfer to a hospital if necessary.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrew Green". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'A'.

Dr Andrew Green
BMA Medical Ethics Committee Chair

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John Firth". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'J'.

Dr John Firth
BMA International Committee Chair