



International Federation of Journalists
From the General Secretary

Paul Kagame
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Republic of Rwanda
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Dear President Kagame,

The International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) has learned that the Rwandan government last week barred well-known Belgian journalist Peter Verlinden from entering the country.

Mr. Verlinden, who works for VRT public television news, was told he could not enter Rwanda with Belgian Development Co-operation Minister Charles Michel on his recent visit to Kigali. Your government has claimed that his reporting on Rwandan news has been “biased” and “genocidal.”

We are supporting Mr. Verlinden, who has said that his work has been unfairly treated by authorities because his reporting has been critical of the government. He has vowed to maintain his independent and unbiased reporting.

The IFJ, the Belgian journalists’ union and Verlinden’s superiors at VRT are all supporting his reporting and calling on the Rwandan government to allow him to enter into the country.

The IFJ believes that reporters and their editors should make all decisions regarding news coverage and that governments should not intervene to shape that coverage. It is the responsibility of the reporter to must exercise good judgement to ensure that their reporting is fair and unbiased.

We urge you to allow Mr. Verlinden to return to Rwanda and to continue to work there without fear of being barred from the country for his journalism.

We look forward to your response.

Kind regards,

AIDAN WHITE
General Secretary

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