

# Africans Rising

For Justice, Peace & Dignity

29<sup>th</sup> July 2020.

To His Excellency Evariste Ndayishimiye,  
President, Republic of Burundi,  
Gitega.

From Africans Rising for Justice, Peace and Dignity

Decongesting Prisons in Africa amidst Covid-19 Pandemic

With humility we convey our warmest greetings and salutations from Africans Rising for Justice, Peace and Dignity and the peoples of the continent of Africa.

Africans Rising for Justice, Peace and Dignity is a rapidly growing collective of social movements, NGOs, popular social justice efforts, faith based groups, trade unions, journalists, intellectuals, artists, athletes, cultural activists and many other people across the continent and diaspora working to build Pan-African solidarity.

We are writing to you at a critical moment of our history as we are experiencing an unprecedented public health emergency due to COVID-19. When we shall look back at this period of history and assess how we fared in nature's examination of humanity, many of the points we score (or don't score) will be due to the kind of leadership we experienced. We shall stumble between praise and criticism of our leaders navigating the complexities of rewriting our societal rules courtesy of COVID-19.

We acknowledge with thanks the efforts taken by your government to decongest prisons, especially as you heeded the call from the World Health Organization to release some prisoners. As you exercise your prerogative of mercy, we at Africans Rising write to you at this point to request that you and your government take a more firm and bold step and release the human rights defenders, journalists and activists who remain incarcerated. These are people who pose no risk to their communities and they are people whose families, friends and communities are rightfully worried about them. This gesture will not only respect their rights to safe and healthy lives, it will help stop the spread of COVID-19 in communities across your country.

Please, Your Excellency, accept the assurances of our highest considerations and esteem.

Signed by:

Kumi Naidoo, Muhammed Lamin Saidykhan and Coumba Toure, Global Ambassador and Movement Co-coordinators, Africans Rising respectively.

CC:

H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat  
Chairperson, African Union Commission