

## Media rights group urge donors to blacklist Rwanda

NAIROBI: A prominent media rights group called on Wednesday (14 July 2010) on the European Union and other donors to suspend financial support for Rwanda's "repressive" regime ahead of next month's presidential polls.

Paris-based Reporters Without Borders (Reporters Sans Frontieres) said Rwanda's government, led by President Paul Kagame, was responsible for "a series of grave press freedom violations" in the African country.

They included the arrest and detention of journalists, closure of Rwanda's two leading independent newspapers for six months, and blocking access to another publication's website.

"How much longer will the international community continue to endorse this repressive regime?" it asked in its statement.

"The international community is becoming its accomplice by supporting next month's election, for which the preparations are being accompanied by widespread harassment and abuses.

"If the European Union stopped disbursing its funding, it would be a clear sign of opposition to the Rwandan government's practices."

RSF said journalist Agnes Uwimana was arrested July 8 after publication of "sensitive" articles about the murder of newspaper editor Jean-Léonard Rugambage and the attempted murder of exiled general Kayumba Nyamwasa in South Africa.

Rugambage, who had accused the Rwandan government of being behind an assassination attempt on a dissident general in South Africa, was gunned down near his house in Kigali on June 25.

According to Rwandan newspaper reports, two other journalists from Uwimana's privately-owned fortnightly *Umurabyo*, were detained on Tuesday.

Kagame, who has led the central African nation since the end of the 1994 genocide, is widely expected to win the August 9 election.

*Source: AFP*