



*Dieudonné Niyonsenga - © DR  
Cyuma Hassan*

**2024**

## **Rwanda - Dieudonné Niyonsenga**

Dieudonné Niyonsenga is a Rwandan freelance journalist known on YouTube as Cyuma Hassan. He has been imprisoned since November 2021.

Dieudonné Niyonsenga is reported to have been physically abused on several occasions in prison. Dieudonné Niyonsenga is said to have shown his wounds to his sister and to have been subjected to “sexual torture”. Many dissidents are held in Nyarugenge prison, which is known for its torture and ill-treatment. Although the Rwandan authorities have been called to account, they have not respected their obligation to investigate to establish the facts and responsibilities. Rwanda has been a party to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment since December 15, 2008.

Known on YouTube for his reporting on societal issues and his freedom of speech, Dieudonné Niyonsenga began to come under particular scrutiny from the Rwandan authorities when he publicly claimed in February 2020 to have seen wounds on Kizito Mihigo's face at his funeral, thus challenging the official version of the famous Rwandan singer and peace activist's suicide in prison. Dieudonné Niyonsenga was arrested on April 15, 2020 for “non-compliance with confinement directives linked to COVID-19” and the use of a false press card as part of a

“wave of arrests and confinement-related abuses”.

Dieudonné Niyonsenga was remanded in custody for a year on charges of “falsifying documents, illegally exercising the profession of journalist and obstructing public works”.

On March 12, 2021, the trial judge at the Gasabo Intermediate Court in Kigali ruled that none of the charges against him were well-founded. He acquitted him and asked for his immediate release, which was granted the following day. But on November 11, 2021, at his appeal trial, the Kigali Court of Appeal sentenced him to seven years' imprisonment for “falsifying documents, illegally exercising the profession of journalist, obstructing public works and humiliating state officials”. During the trial, Dieudonné Niyonsenga denounced the cruel and inhuman conditions of his detention in 2021. He claimed that he had been held in solitary confinement in a cellar and repeatedly beaten. His conditions of detention have not improved since. On January 10, 2024, he appeared before a court in Kigali, where his physical condition had deteriorated, and stated that he was being held in a “hole” that often filled with water, with no access to light, and that he continued to be regularly beaten.

For ACAT-France, Rwanda must respect its legal obligations not to use torture. ACAT-France is also calling for the release of Dieudonné Niyonsenga.

### **What can you do ?**

**Pray for him ! Support him by writing to him !**

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