

Bihozagara's body arrives, family calls for post-mortem

Rodrigue Rwirahira

The New Times, April 6, 2016

The family of the late Jacques Bihozagara, a former Rwandan cabinet minister and diplomat who mysteriously died in a Burundi prison last week, has called on government to help carry out a post mortem examination to determine the actual cause of death for their loved one.

The family of the late Jacques Bihozagara, a former Rwandan cabinet minister and diplomat who mysteriously died in a Burundi prison last week, has called on government to help carry out a post mortem examination to determine the actual cause of death for their loved one.

They made the appeal last evening after the repatriation of the deceased's body from Burundi, from where he died last Wednesday, from a prison facility where he had been incarcerated for over four months.



RPF Secretary General Francois Ngarambe (C) was among those that received the body at the airport yesterday.

Following his death from Mpimba prison, the Government of Rwanda, in a formal statement, demanded their Burundian counterparts to shed more light on the inexplicable circumstances under which Bihozagara died.

Grieving relatives, including the deceased's widow, Jeanne Bihozagara, and daughter Bonita Isaro, friends and officials such as the Secretary General of the governing Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF) Francois Ngarambe were among those that received the body at the airport.



Polisi Denis, a member to the Rwanda Elders Advisory Council looks at the casket containing the remains of Bihozagara at the airport yesterday.

Speaking to *The New Times* shortly after the body was lowered at Kigali International Airport from Burundi, Eugene Muligande, who spoke on behalf of the family of the deceased, hailed the Government of Rwanda for the unconditional support it extended to the family, and urged further support with autopsy.

“This was a crime committed against a Rwandan

citizen, the Government should help investigate with full force; it was an abuse of human rights and this calls for a comprehensive international investigation,” he said, adding that such violations, punishable under international conventions, should not go unpunished.

Muligande said that after Bihozagara’s death, the government of Burundi refused to surrender the body to the family, demanding that the family signs a document absolving the Burundian authorities of any hand in his death.

The draft document, according to Muligande, indicated that they should assent to the ‘fact that he died of natural causes’, a condition which the family objected to insisting that the body had to be subjected to an autopsy to determine, scientifically, the cause of death.

He said they then left the matter to be handled diplomatically, between the two countries.

“We refused to be blackmailed and later let Rwanda’s Embassy in Burundi to handle the case and they did a good job, they were very supportive,” he added.

The body was later transferred to Rwanda National Police hospital mortuary as the family kept the vigil at the deceased’s home in Kibagabaga, Gasabo District.

Bihozagara, who at the time of his death was a businessman in Burundi, formerly served as a cabinet

minister and ambassador to Belgium and France.



Bihozagara’s widow, Jeanne Bihozagara and their daughter Bonita Isaro look at the casket containing the remains of the former Cabinet minister and diplomat, upon its arrival at Kigali International Airport last evening. (All photos by Faustin Niyigena)