Hamburger Stiftung

—————— für politisch Ver­folgte **Vor­sit­zen­der: Olaf Scholz Ge­schäfts­füh­ren­der Vor­stand:**

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**Press Release**

**Ines Lydie Gakiza, radio journalist from Burundi**

**Latest guest with the Hamburg Foundation for Politically Persecuted People**

29 March 2016

Hamburg/ Bujumbura

**After several months of being on the run, Ines Lydie Gakiza safely arrived in Hamburg on Tuesday, 29 March 2016. The 29-year old radio journalist from Burundi, who – faced with growing violence and repression – had to flee her home country, will be living in the Free and Hanseatic city of Hamburg for one year invited by the Hamburg Foundation for Politically Persecuted People.**

Since the legally questionable reelection of President Pierre Nkurunziza in the spring of last year, Burundi has been on the verge of a bloody civil war. Again and again, the regime has tried to silence critical media and its representatives. Supporters of the president mainly targeted independent and private radio stations, since radio is the most important source of information for people in Burundi. Now, most private stations have been destroyed with those who used to work their in hiding or fleeing the country.

The international community and the United Nations are watching the developments in Burundi with great concern. Many are reminded of the situation in the neighboring Rwanda 22 years ago before the genocide.

One of the persecuted journalists is Ines Lydie Gakiza. Until midyear of 2015, she worked as a political reporter at the oppositional station "Radio Publique Africaine" (RPA). With her research on the Burundi government and their human rights violations, but also with her reports on the political and social situation in the neighboring states, she made a name for herself as a challenging and brave journalist.

Faced with the growing danger in her own country, Ms Gazika eventually had to flee to the neighboring Rwanda, where she founded an online radio station and news magazine together with her colleagues.

Following threats of deportation of the “illegal immigrants” by the government in Kigali over the past month, Ms Gakiza was no longer safe in Rwanda either.

We are glad to know that Ines Lydie Gakiza will now be safe with us at the river Elbe. The young woman wants to make the most of her year in Hamburg and inform the public about the volatile situation in her home country, whilst gaining new contacts and improving her professional skills.

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