

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Extrajudicial Executions/Legal Concern

11 December 1991

Burundi

Isidore Ciiza, a farmer and taxi operator
Maria Mawazo (f), wife of Isidore Ciiza
Nduwimana, 5-year boy) Isidore Ciiza's
Anita, 4-year old boy) children
Guillaume, an 8-months old boy)
Goretti (f), a 6-year old girl)
Generose (f), Isidore Ciiza's 18-year old housemaid

The six members of the household of Isidore Ciiza, a farmer and taxi operator, named above were reportedly extrajudicially executed around 26 November 1991 by Burundi government soldiers. They were reportedly killed at Isidore Ciiza's home at Muzinda, about 15 kilometres north of Bujumbura, the capital of Burundi. Isidore Ciiza's second wife called Tabu survived with serious injuries.

The extrajudicial executions took place shortly after rebels attacked military and other installations in Bujumbura and the northwestern provinces of Bubanza and Cibitoke. Following the rebel attack more than 300 people were arrested, many of them on the basis of denunciations by their neighbours, which were reportedly unsubstantiated by material evidence. Nearly 200 of those arrested are reportedly still held in custody. Isidore Ciiza was reportedly denounced to soldiers at Muzinda barracks as illegally possessing firearms. Apparently fearing arrest or execution on the basis of the accusations, he went into hiding.

Six soldiers travelling in an armoured vehicle are reported to have gone to Isidore Ciiza's home and first opened fire on his minibus, parked outside. The soldiers then ordered members of his household to lie on the ground while they searched his house. No weapons were apparently found.

When the soldiers appeared to be leaving the home, they again ordered the family back into the house. The soldiers then reportedly opened fire on the house and moments later ordered the occupants to open the door, which was opened by Tabu, Isidore Ciiza's second wife. One of the soldiers then threw a grenade through the door, injuring virtually all the occupants. Tabu reportedly survived because she saw the grenade and threw herself to the ground with her head under a bed. The soldiers then entered the house and shot the children at close range to ensure that they were dead.

Tabu was taken to hospital for treatment. Isidore Ciiza fled to Bujumbura where he hid for at least one week before he returned to Muzinga to collect his surviving wife. On his return to Bujumbura on 9 December 1991 he was arrested apparently in Bujumbura's Cibitoke zone on the orders of a government official. It is unclear whether he is still held.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Amnesty International continues to receive reports of extrajudicial executions carried out by members of the armed forces which are dominated by members of the minority Tutsi ethnic group. More such killings are reported to have taken place in Bujumbura and the provinces of Cibitoke and Bubanza. Virtually all the victims appear to be members of the majority Hutu ethnic group.

Page 2 of UA 435/91

These killings appear to be similar to those which took place in 1965, 1969, 1972 and 1988 when thousands were summarily killed by members of the security forces following intercommunal disturbances of other political crises which the authorities blamed on the Hutu.

In 1988 the government said that 5,000 people had died during intercommunal disturbances in the northern provinces of Kirundo and Ngozi. Independent observers claimed that many more had died and that most of them were Hutu killed by members of the security forces carrying out reprisals for attacks on Tutsi. Amnesty International called for an independent and impartial investigation to establish responsibility for the killings and to bring those responsible to justice. However, the government refused to order any investigation into responsibility for the killings by members of the security forces, claiming that the security forces had not carried out sectarian and unlawful killings. Amnesty International is concerned that this apparent impunity of the security forces may have led them to believe that they could once again violate human rights.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Telegrams/telexes/express and airmail letters in FRENCH if possible:

- expressing serious concern at reports that six members of Isidore Ciiza's household (naming them), including children, were extrajudicially executed by soldiers from Muzinda barracks and inquiring whether the authorities have also received the reports;

- inquiring whether the authorities have investigated these reports and, if they have not, urging them to order an independent and impartial investigation into reports that unarmed civilians have been extrajudicially executed or subjected to other forms of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment;

- urging the authorities to bring to justice those responsible for extrajudicial executions;

- requesting the authorities to issue clear public instructions to all members of the security forces that extrajudicial executions and other human rights violations are a criminal offence and that those found to be responsible for such abuses will be brought to trial;

- expressing concern about reports that Isidore Ciiza was arrested on 9 December 1991 and asking if he is still held. Urging the authorities to release him immediately if he is still held, unless he is to be charged with a recognizably criminal offence and promptly brought to a fair trial.

APPEALS TO:

1. President:

Son Excellence
Major Pierre Buyoya Président
de la République
Présidence de la République
BP 1870,
Bujumbura, République du Burundi
Telegrams: President Buyoya, Bujumbura, Burundi
Telexes: 5039 presibu bdi or 5049 mnd bdi

Monsieur le Président /
Dear President

2. Prime Minister:

Monsieur Adrien Sibomana
Premier Ministre et
Ministre de la Planification
Présidence de la République
BP 1870
Bujumbura, République du Burundi
Telegrams: Premier Ministre Sibomana, Bujumbura, Burundi
Telexes: 5039 presibu bdi

Monsieur le Premier Ministre /
Dear Prime Minister

Page 3 of UA 435/91

3. Minister of Justice:

Monsieur Sébastien Ntahuga
Ministre de la Justice
Ministère de la Justice
BP 1880
Bujumbura, République du Burundi
Telegrams: Ministre Ntahuga, Bujumbura, Burundi
Telexes: via Ministry of Foreign Affairs:
5065 minirext, attn Ministre Ntahuga

Ministre Ntahuga / Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

Minister of the Interior:

Monsieur Libère Bararunyeretse
Ministre de l'Intérieur et du Développement des collectivités locales
Ministère de l'Intérieur, BP 1910
Bujumbura, République du Burundi

Minister of Foreign Affairs:

Monsieur Cyprien Mbonimpa
Ministre des Relations extérieures et de la Coopération
Ministère des Relations extérieures
BP 1840
Bujumbura, République du Burundi

General Administrator of National Security:

Monsieur Laurent Niyonkuru
Administrateur Général de la Sûreté nationale
Ministère de la Défense nationale
Bujumbura, République du Burundi

Newspaper Editor:

Monsieur le Rédacteur-en-Chef

Le Renouveau

BP 2870, Bujumbura,
République du Burundi

President of Human Rights Organization:

Monsieur Eugène Nindorera

Président

Ligue burundaise des droits de l'homme

BP 177

Bujumbura

République du Burundi

and to diplomatic representatives of Burundi in your country

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat,
or your section office, if sending appeals after 22 January 1992.