

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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UA 30/93 Death Threats/Possible Extrajudicial Execution

8 February 1993

**RWANDA: Human rights activists and others who assisted with a
commission of inquiry into human rights violations in Rwanda
including:**

**Muhikira and
his son Eustache Mupenzi**

Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of human rights activists and others, and their families, who have assisted with an international commission of inquiry into human rights violations in Rwanda. The organization has received reports that people who assisted the commission in its investigations have received death threats from various security and government officials and that one man, whose son worked for the commission, who was reportedly forced to commit suicide by his would-be killers.

Muhikira, a member of the minority Tutsi ethnic group, died on the night of 13 January 1993. Armed gangs from the Hutu ethnic group in Mutura district (*commune*), Gisenyi prefecture, reportedly surrounded his house and ordered him either to come out and be killed by them or commit suicide. The gangs were reportedly accompanied by members of the local administration police who did not intervene to save Muhikira's life. He was apparently targeted because his son, Eustache Mupenzi, acted as an interpreter in January 1993 to the human rights commission of inquiry. The authorities are not known to have taken any action against the gangs. Eustache Mupenzi is reported to have fled from his home in fear of being killed.

Others who assisted the commission in its investigations have received death threats from various security and government officials. Some of the threats and acts of violence have come from supporters of President Juvénal Habyarimana's former ruling party, the Mouvement républicain national pour la démocratie et le développement (MRND), National Republican Movement for Democracy and Development, known as "Interahamwe", and the Hutu-based Coalition pour la défense de la république (CDR), Coalition for the Defence of the Republic. The commission's investigation, which took place in January 1993, was carried out with the knowledge of the Rwandese authorities who are not known to have taken any action to protect those threatened or in danger of being killed.

In mid-1992 the Rwandese transitional government led by a Prime Minister from a party opposed to the policies of the MRND agreed to an international investigation into human rights violations which have occurred since October 1990. A number of non-governmental organizations were invited by the Minister of Justice to take part and their representatives visited Rwanda in January 1993. In a public statement issued after it concluded its investigations, the commission said security and government officials and MRND and CDR supporters had been responsible for widespread human rights violations. In one case it discovered a mass grave near the home of a local official in Gisenyi prefecture. The Minister of Justice who made preparations for the inquiry resigned in October 1992 because the heads of the security forces refused to cooperate with him in bringing perpetrators of abuses

to justice.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In October 1990 rebels belonging to the Front patriotique rwandais (FPR), Rwandese Patriotic Front, attacked Rwanda from neighbouring Uganda. Most FPR fighters are Tutsi. Since the rebel attack about 2,000 people, most of them Tutsi regarded as possible supporters of the FPR, and Hutu members of opposition parties, have been killed by Hutu gangs and members of the security forces. The authorities have so far not brought anyone responsible for the killings to justice.

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Soon after the investigators left Rwanda, Hutu gangs reportedly belonging to the MRND and CDR carried out attacks on Tutsi members of the Bagogwe clan and Hutu supporters of other political parties in Ruhengeri and Gisenyi prefectures in the north-west. The violence is reportedly directed against people whose plight was investigated by the commission and those who cooperated with it. Unconfirmed reports claim that as many as 400 people have been killed since January 1993. The authorities say nearly 100 have been killed. These attacks are reminiscent of attacks against the Bagogwe in January and February 1991 when more than 500 were reportedly killed. Similar violence occurred in several prefectures in 1992.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express and airmail letters either in French, English or your own language:

- expressing concern at reports that death threats have been issued by government and security officials against human rights activists and others who cooperated with the commission of inquiry which investigated human rights violations in Rwanda in January 1993;
- requesting the authorities to ensure protection for those being threatened and make public instructions that those found responsible for such threats or attacks are to be brought to justice;
- expressing concern at reports that Muhikira was forced by armed gangs in Mutura district to commit suicide because his son, Eustache Mupenzi, acted as an interpreter to the commission of inquiry;
- asking the authorities to set up an independent and impartial investigation into the death of Muhikira in order to establish the truth about his death and bring to justice those found responsible for provoking his death.

APPEALS TO

1. President:
Son Excellence
Monsieur le Général-Major
Président HABYARIMANA Juvénal
Président de la République
Présidence de la République
BP 15, Kigali, République rwandaise
**Telegrams: President Habyarimana, Kigali,
Rwanda**
Telexes: 22517
Faxes: + 250 74583

Premier Ministre
Présidence de la République
BP 15, Kigali, République rwandaise
**Telegrams: Premier Ministre, Kigali,
Rwanda**
Telexes: 22502
Faxes: + 250 72902, + 250 72904

**Salutation: Monsieur le Premier Ministre /
Dear Prime Minister**

**Salutation: Monsieur le Président de la
République / Dear President**

2. Prime Minister:
Monsieur NSENGIYAREMYE Dismas

3. Minister of Defence:

Monsieur GASANA James
Ministre à la Présidence pour la Défense
et la Sécurité
BP 15, Kigali, République rwandaise
Telegrams: Ministre Defense, Kigali,
Rwanda
Telexes: 22517
Faxes: + 250 74583

Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre /
Dear Minister

4. Minister of the Interior:

Monsieur MUNYAZESA Faustin
Ministre de l'Intérieur et du Développement
communal
Ministère de l'Intérieur
BP 446, Kigali, République rwandaise
Telegrams: Ministre Interieur, Kigali,
Rwanda
Telexes: 22502
Faxes: + 250 82073

Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre /
Dear Minister

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

Minister of Foreign Affairs:
Monsieur NGULINZIRA Boniface
Ministre des Affaires étrangères et de la
Coopération
Ministère des Affaires étrangères
BP 179
Kigali
République rwandaise

and the following newspapers:
Monsieur Vincent Rwabukwisi
Rédacteur-en-Chef
Journal Kanguka
BP 2119, Kigali, Rwanda

Abbé André SIBOMANA
Rédacteur-en-Chef
Journal Kinyamateka
BP 761, Kigali, Rwanda

and to diplomatic representatives of Rwanda accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 22 March 1993.