

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Extrajudicial Executions

16 November 1990

RWANDA: Michel Karambizi, and his wife and child

Amnesty International has just learned of the reported extrajudicial execution of Michel Karambizi, brother of Silas Majyambere, a prominent businessman, together with his wife and 10-year-old child on 1 October 1990 at their home near Gitarama town by members of the Rwandese security forces. The reported execution took place within hours of the invasion of Rwanda on 1 October 1990 by Ugandan-based Rwandese exiles intending to overthrow the government of President Juvénal Habyarimana. A Rwandese government source has acknowledged the killings but claimed that members of the security forces killed Michel Karambizi, and his wife and child because he was suspected of hindering the security forces from capturing insurgents and their communication equipment.

There is no indication so far that Michel Karambizi was harbouring rebels at his home nor that he or anyone else at his home was armed or that the lives of members of the security forces were threatened by him or his family. The extrajudicial execution of the family seems to have taken place because of the suspected support for the rebels by Silas Majyambere, who has since fled the country in fear of his life.

Amnesty International has received many reports of other similar extrajudicial killings, especially in northeast Rwanda, of people suspected of supporting the rebels but there has been no independent confirmation of these. Responding to widespread allegations that the Rwandese security forces had killed a large number of civilians, a government minister claimed in October that government troops had killed several hundred rebels dressed in civilian clothes.

Amnesty International is concerned that Michel Karambizi and the two members of his family may have been killed deliberately as a retaliation for the suspected support for the rebels by his brother rather than because he posed any lethal threat to the security forces. No form of investigation appears to have been carried out to establish the circumstances of their death and bring those responsible to justice. The organization is also concerned that allegations of extrajudicial executions carried out by government troops in other parts of the country currently under government control remain uninvestigated and this may lead to government forces believing that they can commit further atrocities with impunity.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The current attack launched on northeast Rwanda at the beginning of October resembles several others carried out in the early 1960s by Rwandese refugees based in Uganda and other neighbouring countries. The attacks followed the overthrow in 1959 of the Tutsi monarch by Hutu politicians and subsequent intercommunal violence which led to the killing of hundreds and the flight to exile of tens of thousands of Tutsi. These exiles were responsible for the attacks in the early 1960s and also for this October attack. As a result of a major incursion by Tutsi insurgents in 1963, prisoners supporting the Tutsi cause who were already in detention were executed extrajudicially: it also provoked mass killings of Tutsi throughout the country. More than 50 political prisoners, members of a government overthrown in 1973 and others, were killed in the mid-1970s.

At the end of October 1990 government troops took control of most of the towns occupied by the rebels at the beginning of the fighting. The rebels are now reported to have dispersed to various parts of northern Rwanda. Amnesty International is still investigating reports of extrajudicial executions carried out by rebels including the alleged summary execution in early October of about 15 captured Zairian soldiers who were fighting alongside Rwandese government troops.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Telexes/telegrams/airmail letters, in French if possible:

- expressing concern about the reported extrajudicial execution of Michel Karambizi, his wife and child by members of the Rwandese security forces and inquiring whether the government has investigated this and other reports of extrajudicial executions;
- urging the authorities to set up immediately an independent and competent commission of inquiry to receive and investigate reports of extrajudicial executions and other human rights abuses committed by the security forces in all parts of the country and to call on members of the public to submit evidence to such the commission;
- seeking assurances that the government will guarantee the security and independence of members of the commission and witnesses and that the inquiry will make public its report and make recommendations to the government concerning measures to be taken against security personnel who are found to have committed human rights abuses and measures to be taken to prevent such abuses being committed in future.
- recommending to the government that members of the security forces who have committed atrocities should be brought to justice and their victims or their relatives compensated;

APPEALS TO:

Son Excellence
Président HABYARIMANA Juvénal
Président de la République
BP 15
Kigali, République Rwandaise
Telegrams: President Habyarimana, Kigali, Rwanda
Telexes: 22517

Monsieur MUGEMANA Jean-Marie Vianney
Ministre de l'Intérieur et du développement communal
Ministère de l'Intérieur
BP 446
Kigali, République Rwandaise
Telegrams: Ministre Mugemana, Kigali, Rwanda
Telexes: 22502

Monsieur MUJYANAMA Théoneste
Ministre de la Justice
Ministère de la Justice
BP 160
Kigali, République Rwandaise
Telegrams: Ministre Mujyanama, Kigali, Rwanda

Telexes: 22502

Monsieur le Docteur BIZIMUNGU Casimir
Ministre des Affaires étrangères et de la coopération
Ministère des Affaires étrangères
BP 179
Kigali, République Rwandaise
Telegrams: Ministre Bizimungu, Kigali, Rwanda
Telexes: 22502

COPIES TO:

- Rédacteur-en-Chef, Imvaho, BP 83, Kigali, République Rwandaise
- Rédacteur-en-Chef, Kinyamateka, BP 761, Kigali, République Rwandaise
- Rédacteur-en-Chef, La Relève, Office rwandaise d'information, BP 83,
Kigali, République Rwandaise

and to diplomatic representatives of Rwanda in your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat,
or your section office, if sending appeals after 28 December 1990.