

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Legal Concern

10 December 1990

**RWANDA : Caritas MUSHANGANONO (f)
Jean-Claude PARE
Father Philippe RUKAMBA, Roman Catholic priest
Innocent ZITONI, taxi driver**

The four people mentioned above and several dozen other members of Rwanda's minority Tutsi ethnic group were arrested in November 1990 in Kibungo, southeast Rwanda. They are said to be held in Kibungo central prison and are not known to have been charged with any offence.

Mass arrests occurred in other parts of Rwanda in October, mainly in areas affected by fighting after Uganda-based exiles launched an attack on northeast Rwanda. No fighting has been reported in the Kibungo area. It appears, however, that people who have not demonstrated open support for the government's campaign against the Uganda-based Rwandese exiles, mainly Tutsi, have been arrested in Kibungo, without there being any evidence of their complicity with the rebels. Most of the rebels trying to overthrow the government, which is dominated by members of the majority Hutu ethnic group, are Tutsi.

The Rwandese authorities have arrested more than 5,000 people in connection with the attack since October. Although most of those arrested have since been released, more than 1,000 are still held, apparently without charge or trial. Amnesty International has received reports that at least five detainees have died in detention as a result of overcrowding and poor hygiene in prisons around the country.

Amnesty International is concerned that the four people mentioned above and several dozen others arrested with them may be held solely on the basis of their ethnic origin or family connections with other Tutsi living in exile, rather than because of their involvement in the invasion. Others may also have been arrested because of their non-violent political views. Furthermore, the organization is concerned that the detainees are likely to be held for long periods without charge or trial.

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 the October 1990 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.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Telegrams/telexes/faxes/express and airmail letters (in FRENCH, if possible):

- expressing concern at the reported arrest of Caritas MUSHANGANONO, Jean-Claude PARE, Father Philippe RUKAMBA and Innocent ZITONI, and several dozen other Tutsi in Kibungo and inquiring whether they are still held;

- expressing concern at reports that they may be prisoners of conscience, arrested on account of their ethnic origin or for failing to voice support for the government against the attack by Uganda-based exiles, rather than because there is evidence that they have committed any criminal offence;
- urging the authorities to review the cases of all those arrested in Kibungo in mid-November to ensure that all those who have not committed recognizably criminal offences are released without delay;
- urging the authorities to allow all detainees to receive visits immediately from their relatives, legal representatives and humanitarian organizations, and requesting assurances that they are not being subjected to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment;
- appealing for the release of any held solely for their non-violent opinions or simply because they are related to suspected government opponents.

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 21 January 1991.