

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Legal/Ill-treatment concerns

16 December 1991

RWANDA: Adrien Rangira) journalists of Kanguka newspaper
Obed Bazimaziki)
Antoine Mbarushimana, journalist of Le Soleil newspaper
Théoneste Muberantwari, Editor-in-Chief of Nyabarongo newspaper
and (reportedly in hiding)
Vincent Shabakaka, director of Kaberinka newspaper
Jean-Pierre Mugabe, Editor-in-Chief of Le tribun du peuple newspaper
Théotime Kamanayo, journalist of Kaberinka newspaper
André Kameya, director of Rwanda Rushya newspaper
Edouard Mutsinzi, journalist of Le messenger (Intumwa) newspaper

At the beginning of December 1991 four of the Rwandese journalists named above were reported to have been arrested without a warrant in the capital, Kigali. The others arrested with them, Boniface Ntawuyirushintege, director of Umurangi newspaper, and Godefroid Nshimiyimana, Editor-in-Chief of Kaberinka newspaper, were subsequently released. Neither they nor the four who are still held are known to have been charged with any offence. Five other journalists are currently in hiding fearing arrest. The arrests appear to mark a concerted campaign by the authorities to intimidate journalists to stop them from writing articles which the Rwandese authorities consider to be critical of government officials or policy.

Adrien Rangira and Obed Bazimaziki remain in detention after being arrested on 10 December and are detained at the National Gendarmerie's Muhima detention centre. They are reported to have been arrested because of articles critical of President Juvénal Habyarimana. Adrien Rangira was imprisoned several months in mid-1991 with other Kanguka journalists. A procuracy official is reported to have proposed to remand Adrien Rangira and Obed Bazimaziki in custody at Kigali central prison but the prison's director apparently refused to accept them because no detention warrants had been issued. Antoine Mbarushimana was reportedly arrested on 10 December and is believed to be held in a cell at the National Gendarmerie's Gikondo detention centre. Théoneste Muberantwari was reportedly arrested on 14 December but his place of detention is unknown to Amnesty International. Over the last one year detainees at Muhima and Gikondo detention centres have been reportedly subjected to torture.

Boniface Ntawuyirushintege was arrested on 5 December by members of the *Service central de renseignements* (SCR), Central Intelligence Service. He was reportedly severely beaten at the headquarters of the SCR before being released the same day. He reportedly sustained injuries to his arms and legs. He was rearrested on 6 December by members of the National Gendarmerie and again released on 7 December. After both arrests, and again on 12 December, he was reportedly interrogated about issue number 3 of Umurangi newspaper which apparently contained articles about President Habyarimana. The contents of the articles are not yet known to Amnesty International.

Godefroid Nshimiyimana was arrested on 6 December and released on 9 December, apparently because Kaberinka newspaper contained articles critical of President Habyarimana. He was

reportedly subjected to severe beatings while in custody.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

During the last two years, numerous independent newspapers and magazines have been set up in Rwanda. However, over the same period several dozen journalists have been arrested and some brought to trial in connection with articles considered by the Rwandese authorities to be critical of government officials or policies.

The recent arrests appear to be related to a communiqué critical of Rwandese newspapers and opposition political parties issued by the Direction des opérations militaires des Forces armées rwandaises, Rwandese Armed Forces Directorate of Military Operations. The communiqué was broadcast on 1 December by Rwandese state-owned national radio. It accused some newspapers and political parties (without naming any) of being on the pay roll of the armed rebel group known as the *Front patriotique rwandais* (FPR), Rwandese Patriotic Front, and promoting the rebel group's objectives of regional and ethnic conflict in order to cause a civil war in Rwanda. It claimed the civil war would enable the FPR to come to power after failing militarily to overthrow the government. On 5 December three opposition political parties issued a statement denouncing the communiqué as an attempt by opponents of political reforms to clamp down on freedom of speech and association and calling on the government to dissociate itself from the communiqué and to bring to justice those responsible for writing it. The government is not known to have reacted to the statement by the opposition parties. Since mid-1991 when a multi-party political system was reintroduced, more than five political parties have been formed.

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

- expressing concern at reports that Adrien Rangira, Obed Bazimaziki, Antoine Mbarushimana and Théoneste Muberantwari are detained without charge or trial apparently because their newspapers published articles which displeased the authorities;
- expressing concern that Godefroid Nshimiyimana and Boniface Ntawuyirushintege were held briefly, apparently for the same reasons, and that six other journalists have gone into hiding apparently because they are under threat of arrest;
- expressing concern at reports that some of those arrested have been severely beaten and subjected to other forms of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment and seeking assurances that those still held are safeguarded from ill-treatment and urging the authorities to order an independent and impartial investigation into allegations of torture and ill-treatment and to bring those found to be responsible to justice;
- inquiring whether Adrien Rangira, Obed Bazimaziki, Antoine Mbarushimana and Théoneste Muberantwari are still held and requesting to know the reasons for the arrests and if arrest warrants have been formally issued by the procuracy (*parquet* in French);
- inquiring whether arrest warrants have been issued in respect of any other journalists;
- requesting the authorities to issue clear public instructions to members of the security forces that human rights violations such as torture and beating prisoners are a criminal offence and that those found responsible for such abuses will be brought to justice;
- urging the authorities to release without delay those held solely because they exercised their freedom of speech, unless they are to be charged with recognizably criminal offences and promptly brought to fair trial.

APPEALS TO:

1) Prime Minister and Minister of Justice:
Monsieur Sylvestre NZANZIMANA
Premier Ministre et Ministre de la Justice
Ministère de la Justice
BP 160, Kigali, République rwandaise

**Telegrams: Ministre Justice, Kigali,
Rwanda**

Telexes: 22502
Faxes: + 250 74583

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

2) Minister of Defence and Security:

Le Colonel Augustin NDINDILYIMAN
Ministre à la Présidence pour
la Défense et la Sécurité
BP 15, Kigali, République rwandaise
Telegrams: Ministre Defense et Securite,
Kigali, Rwanda
Telexes: 22517
Faxes: + 250 74583

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

COPIES TO AT LEAST TWO OF THE FOLLOWING:

Monsieur le Docteur Casimir BIZIMUNGU
Ministre des Affaires étrangères
et de la coopération
Ministère des Affaires étrangères
BP 179, Kigali, République Rwandaise

Monsieur Donat HAKIZIMANA
Secrétaire général
Service central de renseignements (SCR)
BP 125, Kigali, République rwandaise
(National security service)

Faxes: +250 72902 or +250 72904

and the following newspapers:

- Monsieur le Rédacteur-en-Chef, Kinyamateka, BP 761, Kigali, République rwandaise
- Monsieur le Rédacteur-en-Chef, La Relève, Office rwandaise d'information, BP 83, Kigali, République rwandaise
- Monsieur le Rédacteur-en-Chef, Isibo, Bureau central, BP 2258, Kigali, République rwandaise
- Monsieur le Rédacteur-en-Chef, Le Tribun du Peuple, BP 2314, 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 27 January 1992.