

PUBLIC

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Torture / Fear of "disappearance"

23 October 2000

DRC / Rwanda

Karume CHISIRIKA ("Kacho"), lecturer
Jean-Pierre BUSINGISI, bar owner
Omer KAMOSO, customs officer
Déogratias MBALABALA, customs officer

The four men named above have been arrested in eastern DRC by a Rwandese-backed armed opposition group. They have been tortured, and there are fears that they will be taken to Rwanda and then "disappear".

They were arrested in Bukavu on 28 September by the *Rassemblement congolais pour la démocratie - Goma* (RCD-Goma), Congolese Rally for Democracy. RCD-Goma claim the men were involved in a grenade attack on a Bukavu market place in which up to 10 people were killed. They say the 26 August attack was the work of the Congolese *mayi-mayi* armed group, and the four men helped them prepare it.

Karume Chisirika is held at the *Direction provinciale de sécurité et de renseignement* (DSR), Provincial Directorate of Security and Intelligence. He has reportedly been subjected to torture, including beating with an iron bar. He has also endured psychological torture: he was taken to a cemetery at night and told he would be killed if he did not sign a confession.

Jean-Pierre Busingisi is held at the *Police spéciale de recherche et de surveillance* (PSRS), Special Police for Research and Surveillance. Omer Kamoso and Déogratias Mbalabala are detained in the Saio military camp in Bukavu, where they have also reportedly been severely ill-treated.

RCD-Goma have reportedly threatened to move the men to military detention centres in Rwanda, where it is likely to be very difficult to trace them. Detainees moved from the DRC to Rwanda in this way have sometimes "disappeared".

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

RCD-Goma, supported by the Rwandese government, is fighting to overthrow the DRC government of President Laurent-Désiré Kabila. They currently control parts of eastern DRC including Bukavu, which is the main town of South Kivu province.

Although the RCD authorities have blamed the 26 August grenade attack on the Congolese armed group, the *mayi-mayi*, which is fighting against the RCD, no group has claimed responsibility for the attack. There is widespread disbelief that an armed group could have penetrated such a heavily guarded area of the city and escaped undetected. Some local sources have alleged that Rwandese soldiers carried out the attack.

Amnesty International has documented numerous cases of torture in the DRC, in both government-controlled areas and areas controlled by the governments of Burundi, Rwanda and Uganda, together with Congolese armed opposition groups. The various authorities either take no action at all against suspected torturers, or carry out a sham investigation to try to obscure the facts and dismiss allegations of human rights violations. rather than bring perpetrators to justice.

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

- appealing to the RCD and Rwandese authorities to guarantee the safety of the four men while they are in custody, to ensure that they are not further ill-treated or tortured and that they immediately receive any medical treatment they may require;
- insisting that the men's families and lawyers are kept informed of where they are held, and are granted regular access to them;

- seeking assurances that the men will not be moved to detention centres in Rwanda or "disappear", and urging that anyone suspected of torturing them is brought to justice;

- asking that the men be brought immediately before a court which meets international standards of fairness to establish if there is any legal basis for their detention and to immediately release them if there is not.

APPEALS TO:

President

Major General Paul KAGAME
Président
Présidence de la République
BP 15, KIGALI
Rwanda

Telegrams: President, Kigali, Rwanda

Fax: + 250 84769/84390

Salutation: Dear President / Monsieur le Président

President, RCD-Goma

Dr Emile Ilunga
Président du Rassemblement congolais pour la démocratie-Goma
c/o Ministère de la Défense
BP 23, KIGALI
Rwanda

Fax: + 250 72431/76969

Salutation: Dear President / Monsieur le Président

Governor of South-Kivu Province

Norbert Basengezi Katintima
Gouverneur de la Province du Sud-Kivu
c/o Ministère de la Défense
BP 23, KIGALI
Rwanda

Fax: + 250 72431/76969

Salutation: Dear Governor / Monsieur le Gouverneur

COPIES TO:

Gasana Ndoba
President of the National Human Rights Commission
BP 269, KIGALI
Rwanda

Fax: + 250 82702

and to diplomatic representatives of the DRC and Rwanda accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 4 December 2000.