

PUBLIC

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16 May 2000

Further information on UA 114/00 (AFR 16/08/00, 10 May 2000) - Fear of ill-treatment and new concern: Fear of "Disappearance"

BURUNDIALphonsine MINANI (f) (released)
Salvatore KARARAYE
Berchmans BIZIMANA
Gaspard NDABIGEZE
Claude HICUBURUNDI (released)
Innocent

New names : Albert BUCUMI
Bigirimana

At least one of the people arrested at Kavumu regroupment camp on 7 May, Bigirimana, is now feared to have "disappeared". Amnesty International is seriously concerned for his safety.

Bigirimana was accused of throwing stones during the disturbance earlier in the day at the camp. He was taken to a nearby military post at Cinkona where he is reported to have been seriously beaten. Several days later when others went to the post to ask after him, soldiers denied that he had ever been held.

Albert Bucumi and at least one other man, who has since been released, were already detained at the post following their arrest on 6 May in Kanyosha commune. They were reportedly accused of collaboration with armed opposition groups in the area, apparently because soldiers found them away from their camps. Both reportedly had their arms tied behind their backs and were severely beaten.

Of the others arrested on 7 May, Alphonsine Minani was released on 13 May and Claude Hicuburundi was released on 16 May. The other people named above are now known to be held in the cells of the *Police spéciale de roulage* (PSR), Special Haulage Police, in the compound of the *District* of Rural Bujumbura, a gendarmerie detention centre in Bujumbura. However, the detainees are held incommunicado and human rights groups and others have not been allowed to visit them. Some reports claim that up to 14 people were arrested.

It is now known that the visit of the local government delegation and members of the security forces (both soldiers and gendarmes) to Kavumu camp on 7 May followed the sighting, on 4 May, of a large number of armed combatants nearby. Soldiers in the area had reportedly retreated and sought protection in the camp. The looting and pillaging which took place on 7 May, and which appears to have been in reprisal for the soldiers having to retreat two days earlier, was conducted during a search operation carried out after claims that the camp had been infiltrated by armed opposition groups or that camp inhabitants were giving support to members of these groups. No weapons are reported to have been found. The Governor of Rural Bujumbura, who was addressing the camp population at the time and who was initially unaware of the looting, reportedly tried to intervene. However, he was unable to stop the soldiers and when he left the camp, the looting was still going on.

On 11 May, a government spokesperson said there would be an inquiry into the incident. He stated that an operation to investigate allegations that the camp had **been** infiltrated had taken place on 7 May and that this operation had been interrupted by the camp population who had tried to prevent the camp being

searched. The government spokesperson criticised foreign radio stations for broadcasting what he called "unverified allegations". Although access to the camp was blocked off for one day following the looting, it is now reported to be freely accessible. A delegation from the National Assembly visited the camp on 12 May.

FURTHER RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express/airmail letters in French or in your own language (Please check whether postal services are operating to Burundi from your country):

- calling for the arrest and apparent "disappearance" of Bigirimana to be immediately investigated and for his whereabouts to be made public;
- calling for immediate steps to be taken to protect Bigirimana and Albert Bucumi from further ill-treatment;
- calling for immediate action to protect Salvatore Kararaye, Berchmans Bizimana, Gaspard Ndabigeze & Innocent who are detained at the *Police spéciale de Roulage* (PSR), and for them to be given immediate access to their families, medical care, and humanitarian and human rights organizations;
- calling for them to be released if they are not to be promptly charged with a recognizably criminal offence for which there is substantiating evidence.

APPEALS TO (Please note it can be difficult to get faxes through. Please keep trying):

Procureur Général de la République
Monsieur Gérard NGENDABANKA
Procureur Général de la République
Bujumbura
Burundi

Telegrams: Procureur general, Bujumbura, Burundi

Fax: + 257 24 15 03

Salutation: Monsieur le Procureur général de la République / Dear State Public Prosecutor

Minister of Defence
Colonel Cyrille NDAYIRUKIYE
Ministre de la Défense Nationale
Ministère de la Défense Nationale
BUJUMBURA
Burundi

Telegrams: Ministre Defense, Bujumbura, Burundi

Fax: 257 22 39 59 / 22 71 05

Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre / Dear Minister

Minister of Justice
Monsieur TERENCE SINUNGURUZA
Ministre de la Justice et Garde des sceaux
Ministère de la Justice
BP 1880, BUJUMBURA
Burundi

Telegrams: Ministre Justice, Bujumbura, Burundi

Fax: 257 22 21 48

Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre / Dear Minister

Public Prosecutor, Rural Bujumbura
Procureur de la République de Rural Bujumbura
BUJUMBURA

Burundi

Telegram: Procureur Bujumbura rural, Bujumbura, Burundi

Salutation: Monsieur le Procureur de la République

COPIES TO:

Monsieur Eugène NINDORERA

Ministre des Droits de la Personne humaine, des Réformes institutionnelles et des Relations avec l'Assemblée nationale, Ministère des Droits de la Personne humaine, des Réformes institutionnelles et des Relations avec l'Assemblée nationale, BUJUMBURA, Burundi

Fax: + 257 21 75 49

and to diplomatic representatives of Burundi accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 27 June 2000.