

EXTERNAL

AI Index: AFR 16/32/97

12 August 1997

Further information on UA 73/97 (AFR 16/04/97, 19 March 1997) and follow-ups (AFR 16/13/97, 25 April, AFR 16/15/97, 21 May and AFR 16/18/97, 6 June) - Fear of ill-treatment / Torture / Medical concern / Death in custody / Fear of "disappearance"

BURUNDI Commandant Ndabacekure, army officer

Captain Nziyimana, army officer

Isaac Nitereka, engineer with Brasserie du Burundi, member of the executive board of PARENA and PARENA representative for urban Bujumbura

Alexis Simbavimbere, Burundi Batteries Industries financial manager, PARENA member

Laurent Bimenyumuremyi, deputy provincial representative PARENA representative in Gitega

Emmanuel Manzi (also known as Paul Mugambage, a Rwandese national, ex-member Rwandese Patriotic Front, Rwanda

Isidore Rufyikiri, senior PARENA official

Jean Paul Bizimana

Léonidas Ntakaye, member of the executive board of PARENA

Amnesty International has received confirmation that Laurent Bimenyumuremyi has not "disappeared" and is currently being held in Muramvya prison. He is not reported to have been ill-treated since his transfer to Muramvya prison. He remains held without charge.

Amnesty International had feared that Laurent Bimenyumuremyi had "disappeared" following his arrest in March 1997. He had been held for a week in the *Documentation nationale*, intelligence unit, in Bujumbura, before being transferred to another place of detention. Following his transfer, according to information received by Amnesty International, the authorities appeared unwilling to confirm his place of detention, and said variously he was held in the Mpimba central prison, Bujumbura, Gitega central prison, Gitega province, and Muramvya prison, Muramvya province.

The men named above are accused of being behind a series of mine explosions in Bujumbura, the capital, and of involvement in a plot to assassinate president Major Buyoya. None are known to have been charged. The majority of the detainees are reported to have been ill-treated in the early stages of their detention and on or around 11 May 1997, one of the detainees, Lt-Col (Retd) Ntako, died as a result of denial of medical care. The detainees are held in places of detention all around the country. Many are far from their families making visits difficult. Prison conditions in Burundi are harsh and families often provide a valuable source of food.

Unless any new emergency situation arises in relation to these detainees, this UA will close and the case be transferred to another AI network. However, those UA participants who are able to are asked to send a further round of faxes or letters in French or in your own language:

- seeking assurances that all the detainees named above will be safeguarded from ill-treatment and torture and that they will be allowed continuing access to doctors, legal counsel, their families and humanitarian organizations;
- seeking clarification of the legal status of the detainees and of the basis of the accusation against them and calling for legal procedures to be fully adhered to;

- urging that they be released if they are not to be charged with recognizably criminal offences and brought to trial in accordance with international standards of fairness;
 - urging that reports that they were tortured during the early stages of their detention be investigated and if confirmed, those responsible removed from positions of authority and brought to justice in accordance with international standards of fairness;
- if possible, also:**
- asking whether a full investigation has taken place into the circumstances of the death of Lt-Col (Retd) Ntako in Muyinga prison.

Please note: It may now be possible to send mail to Burundi. Please check with your national postal service.

APPEALS TO:

Minister of Justice

Monsieur Terence SINUNGURUZA

Ministre de la Justice et Garde des sceaux

BP 1880

Ministère de la Justice

Bujumbura, Burundi

Fax: +257 21 61 02 (Via the Minister for Human Rights. Please ask for your fax to be forwarded to the Minister of Justice.)

Salutation : Monsieur le Ministre

President

Major Pierre Buyoya

Président de la République

Présidence de la République

BP 1870

Bujumbura, Burundi

Fax: +257 22 7490

Salutation: Monsieur le Président/Dear President

Minister of Defence

Lieutenant-Col. Firmin SINZOYIHEBA

Ministre de la Défense Nationale

Ministère de la Défense

Bujumbura, Burundi

Fax: +257 22 56 86

Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre

COPIES TO:

Minister for Human Rights, Social and Women's Affairs

Madame Christine RUHAZA

Ministre des Droits de la Personne humaine, de l'Action sociale et de la Promotion de la femme

Bujumbura, Burundi

Fax: +257 21 61 02

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 September 1997.