

EXTERNAL

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EXTRA 25/97

Fear of torture and ill-treatment

25 February 1997

**BURUNDI Domitien Ndayizeye, aged 44, Executive secretary of the Front for Democracy in Burundi (FRODEBU)**

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Domitien Ndayizeye, the Executive Secretary of the *Front pour la Démocratie au Burundi* (FRODEBU), Front for Democracy in Burundi, a former ruling party, was arrested without a warrant at his home on 22 February 1997 by members of the *Police de Sécurité Publique* (PSP), Public Security Police. He is currently detained at Kigobe PSP detention centre in the capital, Bujumbura. Amnesty International is concerned that he may be subjected to torture and ill-treatment, particularly during interrogation.

Members of the PSP are reported to have come to his home at around 5am with a warrant to search his house for "subversive documents". They arrested him and took all written documents, diskettes and computers in the house. He is not known to have been charged with any offence.

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Although Major Pierre Buyoya promised to end human rights violations when he came to power after a coup d'état in July 1996, Amnesty International has documented thousands of cases of extrajudicial execution, arbitrary arrest and torture. Critics and opponents of the government, including former president Jean-Baptiste Bagaza, currently under house arrest, have been harassed and arrested.

On 20 January 1997, the house of the FRODEBU Secretary General, Augustin Nzojibwami, was searched by members of the security forces. A large number of documents, containing information about party members and human rights violations committed by the security forces against party members since the coup d'état of Major Buyoya, were reportedly taken away. He was subsequently arrested on 11 February, after being under house arrest since 7 February. He was taken to Mpimba prison and accused of subversive activities and inciting civil unrest. He was also accused of having distributed arms to the population in 1994 as Governor of Bururi and to have ordered an attack on a military camp in 1995. He was released on 12 February following a decision by the Supreme Court not to uphold a preventive detention order. He was again put under house arrest on 20 February 1997.

Burundi has been in a state of civil war since the coup attempt of 21 October 1993. Since then, more than 150,000 people have been killed by security forces or armed groups from both Tutsi and Hutu communities. More than 6,500 civilians, mostly Hutu, including at least 2,600 accused of involvement in massacres, are held in various prisons and detention centres around the country. The majority are held without charge. Torture is reported to be carried out systematically, and with impunity, in detention centres belonging to the security forces. Deaths in custody are also often reported.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/faxes (there is currently no post to Burundi) in French or your own language:**

- seeking clarification of the reasons for the arrest of Domitien Ndayizeye;
- urging that he be safeguarded from torture and ill-treatment, and that he be allowed immediate access to legal counsel, medical care and his family;
- calling for legal procedures to be fully adhered to, and for him to be released if he is not to be charged with a recognizably criminal offence.

**APPEALS TO:**

Minister of Justice

Gervais Rubashamiheto

Ministre de la Justice et Garde des sceaux

**Fax: +257 22 2148**

**Telegrams: Ministre Rubashamiheto, Bujumbura, Burundi**

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

Minister of Interior

Lieutenant-Colonel Epitace BAYAKANAKANDI

Ministre de l'Intérieur

**Fax : + 257 222148 / 213055**

**Telegrams: Ministre de l'Intérieur, Bujumbura, Burundi**

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

Procurator General

Monsieur Jean-Bosco BUTASI

Procureur Général

**Fax: +257 222148**

**Telegrams: Procureur General, Bujumbura, Burundi**

**Salutation: Monsieur le Procureur Général / Dear Procurator General**

**COPIES TO:**

President

Major Pierre Buyoya

Président de la République

**Fax: +257 22 7490**

Minister for Human Rights

Madame Christine RUHAZA

Ministre des Droits de la Personne

**Fax: + 257 216102**

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 26 March 1997.