

UA 68/01

"Disappea.**BURUNDI Paul NSANZURWIMO****Emile MASABO****Célius NTUKAMAZINA****André NYERETFE****BARUSHUBWIRA****MASENGO****Jimmy****One other man, name not known**

The eight men named above have not been seen since 16 March 2001 when they were taken away by members of the armed forces. Amnesty International is concerned for their safety, and fears that they are at serious risk of torture or "disappearance".

The eight men were arrested in Kirukura, Maramvya sector, close to the capital, Bujumbura. They were initially held at a nearby military post, but were moved to an unknown destination in the early evening of 16 March. They have not been seen since. Their relatives and human rights defenders have been unable to establish their whereabouts. The reason for their arrest is not known. However, it is thought that they may have been accused of cooperating with the *Forces nationales de libération* (FNL), National Liberation Forces, which is one of the most active armed opposition groups in Burundi.

One of them, Paul Nsanzurwimo, had been released on 14 March after being detained for five days. He had been accused of collaborating with the FNL. His arrest appeared to be completely arbitrary (see UA 56/01, AFR 16/012/2001, 13 March 2001 and follow-up AFR 16/014/2001, 14 March 2001).

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In Burundi, detainees are routinely tortured or ill-treated in the early stages of detention. The problem is particularly acute in military detention, where detainees are often held incommunicado in illegal places of detention. People suspected of having cooperated with armed opposition groups are particularly vulnerable and are systematically beaten, tied in excruciating positions, deprived of food and told they will be killed. Last year, several detainees died in custody a result of torture.

The FNL launched a sustained assault on Bujumbura on 24 February, and occupied parts of the city for several days before withdrawing around 10 March. The number of people killed, civilian or military, is not known. The situation remains tense, although few human rights abuses are reported to have been committed during the attack, either by the FNL or by government armed forces, who both have poor human rights records. Since the attack, the security forces have detained a number of people in or around Bujumbura, most of them on an arbitrary basis, in an attempt to apprehend possible FNL members.

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

- calling on the authorities to guarantee the safety and physical well-being of the eight men named above (please give names);
- asking for their place of detention to be made public;

- calling for them to be given immediate access to their families, lawyers, necessary medical care, and to humanitarian and human rights organizations;
- asking to be informed of the basis for their arrest;
- urging that they are immediately released if they are not to be charged with a recognizably criminal offence;
- calling on the authorities to ensure that all law enforcement agencies respect arrest and detention procedures, and that access to all places of detention is guaranteed;
- urging that immediate action is taken against any member of the security forces suspected of human rights abuses, including against detainees.

APPEALS TO (Please note, it can be difficult to get through on the numbers given below, and you may be told by the operator that they are temporarily out of order. Please be patient and keep trying):

Head of State

Son Excellence

Major Pierre BUYOYA

Président de la République

Présidence de la République

BP 1870 Bujumbura, Burundi

Telegrams: President, Bujumbura, Burundi

Faxes: + 257 22 74 90

Salutation: Monsieur le Président de la République / Dear President

Minister of National Defence

Colonel Cyrille NDAYIRUKIYE

Ministre de la Défense Nationale

Ministère de la Défense Nationale

BUJUMBURA, Burundi

Telegrams: Ministre Defense, Bujumbura, Burundi

Faxes: + 257 22 56 86

Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre / Dear Minister

Chief of Defence Staff

Général Major Vincent NIYUNGEKO

Chef de l'Etat-major général des Forces armées

Etat-major général des Forces armées

Ministère de la Défense nationale

BP 1870 Bujumbura, Burundi

Telegram: Chef Etat Major, Forces armées, Bujumbura, Burundi

Saluation: Monsieur le Chef de l'Etat-major/Dear Chief of Defence Staff

Fax: + 257 22 39 59 / 21 75 05

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

COPIES TO:

Minister for Human Rights, Institutional Reform and Relations with the National Assembly

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 38 47

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 30 April 2001.