

PUBLIC

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Fear for safety / Fear of torture and ill-treatment /  
Legal concern

18 September 1998

**BURUNDI**Emile Ntahomvukiye

Constance Ngendakumana

Their son, Pontien Twagirayezu, aged 20

And their two other children, names not known, aged 3 and 5 years old

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Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of the family named above who have been in detention since April 1998. They are reported to have been regularly beaten and ill-treated by the administrator of the commune. In addition to this, conditions of detention in Burundi, including in district cells, are very harsh and often amount to cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment.

The family appears to have been illegally arrested and detained, at the *cachot communal* (district cell) in Isale commune, Rural Bujumbura province, in order to force them to reveal the location of a sum of money supposedly hidden by Pontien Twagirayezu. No family member is known to have been accused of a criminal offence.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

More than 9,000 civilians, mostly Hutu, are held in various prisons and detention centres around the country. Hundreds of these, mainly Hutu, have been arrested and accused of participating in or collaborating with Hutu-dominated armed opposition groups. In many cases there is no substantiating evidence to support the accusation and many of the arrests appear to be arbitrary. The majority are held without charge or trial. Many have been tortured and ill-treated to extract statements or information. There are numerous reports of "disappearances" of detainees, particularly in military camps. Children as young as 12 years old have been arbitrarily accused of collaboration with armed groups and unlawfully detained. Increasingly, individuals appear to be arrested, and often ill-treated, for reasons of extortion.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please check with your post office whether postal services from your country are functioning to Burundi. Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes - and if you are able, express/airmail letters - in French or your own language:**

- expressing concern for the safety of the family named above, who are illegally detained at Isale district cell, in Bujumbura Rural, where they are reported to have been regularly beaten and ill-treated;
- calling for their arrest and detention to be immediately investigated and for their physical integrity to be protected;
- calling for the detainees to be immediately and unconditionally released;
- reminding the Government of Burundi of its commitment to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in particular Article 9: "No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile".

**APPEALS TO (please note that fax tones can be difficult to obtain at certain times of the day):**

President

Major Pierre Buyoya

Président de la République

Présidence de la République

Bujumbura

Burundi

**Telegrams: Major Buyoya, Bujumbura, Burundi**

**Telexes:** 5036PRESIBU  
**Faxes:** + 257 22 74 90  
**Salutation:** Monsieur le Président / Dear President

Minister of Justice  
Monsieur Terence SINUNGURUZA  
Ministre de la Justice et Garde des sceaux  
Ministère de la Justice, Bujumbura, Burundi  
**Telegram:** Ministre Justice, Bujumbura, Burundi  
**Faxes:** + 257 22 21 48  
**Salutation:** Monsieur le Ministre / Dear Minister

Minister for Internal Affairs and Public Security  
Col. Ascension TWAGIRAMUNGU  
Ministre de l'Intérieur et de la Sécurité Publique  
Ministère de l'Intérieur  
Bujumbura, Burundi  
**Faxes:** + 257 22 19 82  
**Salutation:** Monsieur le Ministre / Dear Minister

Governor of Rural Bujumbura  
Dr Stany NTAHOBARI  
Isale, Bujumbura Rural  
Burundi  
**Telegrams:** Governor of Rural Bujumbura, Bujumbura Rural, Burundi  
**Salutation:** Monsieur le Gouverneur / Dear Gouvernor

**COPIES TO:**

Minister for Human Rights, Insitutional Reform and Relations with the National Assembly  
Monsieur Eugène NINDORERA  
Ministre des droits de la Personne humaine, des réformes institutionnelles, et des relations avec  
l'Assemblée nationale, Bujumbura, Burundi  
**Faxes:** + 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 October 1998.

**"No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile."**  
*Article 9, Universal Declaration of Human Rights*

Visit the Amnesty International UDHR campaign website on <http://www.amnesty.excite.com>