

EXTERNAL

AI Index: AFR 16/37/96

EXTRA 184/96

"Disappearance" / Fear of extrajudicial
execution

29 November 1996

BURUNDIA number of prisoners, including:

Lambert Ntawuhebimana

Nkerabahizi

Bigirimana

Remegie Bikorimana

Ananias Baransananiye

Amnesty International is concerned that on 27 November 1996, members of the Burundi security forces, took a number of prisoners from Muyinga prison, Muyinga Province in northeastern Burundi allegedly to be tried in their villages. One of the prisoners' shoes was later found in a bush near the *brigade* (gendarmierie station) in Muyinga town. None of the prisoners have been seen since and Amnesty International fears that the men are at grave risk of extrajudicial execution.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

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. Amnesty International has repeatedly called on the Burundi authorities to investigate human rights violations, including extrajudicial execution, "disappearance", torture and ill-treatment and arbitrary arrest, committed by members of the Burundi security forces who continue to act with complete impunity.

Since the coup in July 1996 which returned Major Pierre Buyoya to power, the conflict has continued, as have human rights abuses by government security forces and Tutsi and Hutu armed groups have continued. The United Nations have reported that about 10,000 people have been killed in politically motivated violence since July 1996.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send faxes or telegrams (no post is currently getting through) in French or your own language:

- expressing concern for the safety of prisoners, including the five men named above, who have not been seen since they were taken from Muyinga prison on 27 November 1996 by members of the Burundi security forces, reportedly to be taken to their villages to be tried;
- urging that the Burundi authorities urgently establish and make public the whereabouts of the prisoners and take immediate steps to guarantee their safety;
- calling on the authorities to promptly investigate the incident and to bring to justice, in accordance with international standards of fairness, officials who are found to have carried out or condoned human rights violations.

APPEALS TO:

Minister of Justice

Gervais RUBASHAMIHETO

Ministre de la Justice et Garde des sceaux

Fax: 257 222 148

Telegrams: Ministre Rubashamiheto, Bujumbura, Burundi

Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre/Dear Minister

Minister of Defence

Lieutenant Colonel Firmin SINZOYIHEBA

Ministre de la Défense nationale

Fax : + 257 213 055

Telegrams: Ministre de la Défense, Bujumbura, Burundi

Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre / Dear Minister

Minister of Interior

Lieutenant-Colonel Epitace BAYAKANAKANDI

Ministre de l'Intérieur

Fax : + 257 222 148 / 213 055

Telegrams: Ministre de l'Intérieur, Bujumbura, Burundi

Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre/Dear Minister

Gendarmerie Chief of Staff

Lieutenant-Colonel Georges MUKORAKO

Chef d'Etat-Major de la Gendarmerie nationale

Fax: + 257 222 148

Telegrams: Chef d'Etat-Major Mukorako, Bujumbura, Burundi

Salutation: Monsieur le Chef d'Etat-Major / Dear Chief of Staff

COPIES TO:

President

Major Pierre BUYOYA

Président de la République

Fax: 257 227 490

Telegrams: Major Buyoya, Bujumbura, Burundi

Minister for Human Rights

Madame Christine RUHAZA

Ministre des Droits de la Personne

Fax: + 257 216 102

Telegrams: Ministre Ruhaza, Bujumbura, Burundi

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 December 1996.