

30 April 1997

Further information (3) on UA 199/96 (AFR 4716/96, 8 August 1996) and follow-ups AFR 47/19/96, 15 August, AFR 47/21/96, 13 September - fear for safety / fear of ill-treatment / fear of arbitrary arrest and new concern: possible extrajudicial execution

RWANDA Appolos Hakizimana, journalist - killed
Amiel Nkuriza, journalist

Amnesty international is extremely concerned at the killing on 27 April 1997 of Appolos Hakizimana by unidentified gunmen. The organization is also concerned for the life of Amiel Nkuriza, another journalist who previously worked with him.

Appolos Hakizimana was shot dead by two gunmen in the Nyamirambo suburb of the capital, Kigali, as he was approaching his house. His killers and a woman who accompanied them were apparently seen in a nearby bar before they followed, restrained and gagged him before shooting him through the ear. He was accompanied by his younger sister who was left unharmed.

Appolos Hakizimana was arrested on 30 July 1996 and accused by the Rwandese authorities of being a member of the *interahamwe* (a militia responsible for carrying out massacres in Rwanda in 1994) after writing articles in the newspaper, *Intego*. After his release around 19 August 1996 he reportedly received death threats. In January 1997 he started a new newspaper known as *Umuravumba* whose third edition was seized in mid-March 1997 by the Procuracy (*Parquet*). This edition reportedly contained reports of massacres by the Rwandese Patriotic Army (RPA). Several weeks later, armed men tried to kidnap him, but were foiled after his neighbours intervened. The gunmen reportedly threatened that he would be dead within weeks.

Amiel Nkuriza was abducted on 6 August 1996 by four men, one in military uniform and three in civilian clothes. He was released on 13 August 1996. It is feared that he too may be targeted for assassination.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Several journalists in Rwanda who have been critical of the present government have been victims of human rights violations, including arrests, ill-treatment and attempted extrajudicial executions, as well as persistent harassment and intimidation. Along with other human rights activists, including members of local human rights organizations and judicial officials, journalists have been among the main targets of the government's attempts to repress criticism of its human rights record.

Journalists working for *Intego* have been particularly singled out for harassment because of what is perceived as the critical editorial line of the newspaper. Amiel Nkuriza, the director of the journal, has been arrested previously and was detained for one day, on 10 June 1996, after publishing an article about difficulties of cohabitation between the Hutu and Tutsi ethnic groups in the southern part of Rwanda. Joseph Akimana, another journalist of *Intego*, was beaten up by soldiers in mid June 1996.

Intego is the successor of the independent newspaper *Le Messenger*. The editor of *Le Messenger*, Edouard Mutsinzi, almost lost his life in February 1995 after being attacked by a group of men

with machetes in Nyamirambo neighbourhood, some of whom wore military insignia. *Le Messenger* was closed and forced to change its name following pressure from the military authorities.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express/airmail letters in English/French or your own language:

- condemning the killing of Appolos Hakizimana and asking that an immediate and full public inquiry be carried out to identify the perpetrators;
- urging the authorities to publicly denounce the killing and pointing out that such killings, even of people accused of being *interahamwe*, cannot be tolerated in Rwanda and that those responsible will be identified and brought to justice;
- seeking assurances that measures will be taken to ensure that Amiel Nkuriza, and other journalists who have been detained or threatened in the past, will be protected and allowed to freely exercise their freedom of expression;
- demanding that the authorities take measures to prevent baseless accusations of involvement in the genocide and that any such accusations are handled by the judiciary and ensuring that neither government nor security officials nor members of the public will be allowed to attack the accused outside the law.

APPEALS TO:

Prime Minister

Monsieur Pierre-Célestin RWIGEMA

Premier Ministre

Présidence de la République

BP 15, Kigali, Rwanda

Faxes: +250 83714

Telegrams: Premier Ministre, Kigali, Rwanda

Salutation: Monsieur le Premier Ministre / Dear Prime Minister

Minister of Information

Jean Népomuscène NAYINZIRA

Ministre de l'Information et Porte-parole du gouvernement

Ministère de l'Information

BP 1532, Kigali, Rwanda

Telegrams: Ministre de l'Information, Kigali, Rwanda

Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre / Dear Minister

Director of Rwandese Information Office

Major Wilson RUTAYISIRE

Directeur, Office rwandais de l'Information (ORINFOR)

Kigali, Rwanda

Fax: +250 76185

Telegrams: Directeur, ORINFOR, Kigali, Rwanda

Salutation: Monsieur le Directeur / Dear Director

Minister of Interior

Cheikh Abdul KARIM HARELIMAN

Ministre de l'Intérieur

BP 446, Kigali, Rwanda

Faxes: +250 84373; 83374

Telegrams: Ministre de l'Intérieur, Kigali, Rwanda

Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre / Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

Vice-President/Minister of Defence

Général Major Paul Kagame

Vice-Président de la République et Ministre de la Défense

Présidence de la République, BP 15, Kigali, Rwanda

Fax: +250 72431; 76969

and to diplomatic representatives of Rwanda accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 11 June 1997.