
AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL NEWS SERVICE 22/94

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NEWS SERVICE ITEMS: EXTERNAL - BURUNDI

PLEASE NOTE: SEE NORTHERN IRELAND Q&A - Sorry, the date at the top of the Q&A should have been **2 February 1984** not 4 Sept. 1991, but everything else stays the same.

NEWS INITIATIVES - INTERNAL

INTERNATIONAL NEWS RELEASES

UK - 9 February - SEE NEWS SERVICE 170

Kuwait - 24 February - SEE NEWS SERVICE 170

TARGETED AND LIMITED NEWS RELEASES

* European Parliament & Political killings/"disapps" Handbook - 23 Feb

Pierre Sané is speaking to the European Parliament on 22 February and at a press conference organized by Johannes of the AI EC office in Brussels at 10.30 am 23 February. Johannes is writing a speech for Pierre to give to Parliament and this will be sent to sections via the News Service when the IS receives it from him. The IS is preparing a news service item about the Handbook on Political killings & "disappearances". The press conference will serve to tell journalists what Pierre said to Parliament as well as to launch the Handbook. The Handbook news service item and hard copies of the speech given to Parliament will be given to media at the press conference. Please contact the Dutch Section if you wish to order copies of the Handbook, an order form was sent out with the weekly mailing on 15 December 1993 (AI INDEX: ACT 33/77/93).

FORTHCOMING NEWS INITIATIVES

Women - 8 March - SEE NEWS SERVICE 161

Saudi Arabia - 31 March more details to follow

Colombia - 16 March - SEE NEWS SERVICE 123 + UAs AMR 23/56-57/93

South Africa - 23 March - SEE NEWS SERVICE 05/94

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3 February 1994

BURUNDI: RENEWED OUTBREAK OF INTERCOMMUNAL VIOLENCE

Following a new outbreak of intercommunal violence in Burundi, Amnesty International is urging the country's political leaders to refrain from and condemn activities or statements likely to be interpreted by their supporters as a call for violence and further human rights abuses. More than 40 people are reported to have been killed in and around Burundi's capital, Bujumbura, in the past two days.

The organization is also calling on the Burundi Government and commanders of the security forces to ensure that the lives of innocent civilians are protected and that the armed forces use only methods strictly necessary for the execution of their duties.

Amnesty International has received reports that more than 40 civilians have been killed and many homes destroyed since 31 January. Members of the security forces have been deployed in the capital to stop violence on the streets. However, there are reports that the security forces have failed to stop killings in residential areas of the city. There are fears that violence may spread to other parts of the country.

The latest violence started when opposition leaders from the Tutsi ethnic group called on their supporters to take action to force the government to reverse its decision last weekend to dissolve the Constitutional Court. Their supporters set up barricades and used violence to stop members of the public from going to work. The violence later degenerated when Tutsi attacked and killed members of the majority Hutu ethnic group from which the government draws most of its support, simply on account of their political origin.

As a further reaction, there are reports that in some parts of Bujumbura Hutu civilians are carrying out reprisals against Tutsi. Independent sources in Burundi have alleged that Hutu outside Bujumbura are preparing to launch a campaign of violence in support of the government. There are fears this would be directed primarily against Tutsi civilians.

The current round of killings in Burundi started with an attempted military coup last October when President Melchior Ndadaye and other senior ruling party officials, including the President of the National Assembly and his deputy, were killed by the army. More than 100,000 people are believed to have been killed during the following two months. In early January the National Assembly appointed a new head of state to replace the slain President. The appointment was challenged in the Constitutional Court by the opposition. The Court's two Hutu members reportedly supported the National Assembly decision while its five Tutsi members considered the appointment unconstitutional. The two Hutu judges resigned and in the event the Court did not publish any decision before it was dissolved by the government.

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