
AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL NEWS SERVICE 157/93

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NEWS SERVICE ITEMS: EXTERNAL - BURUNDI, TURKEY

PLEASE NOTE: EFAI has a new address from 22 November. Following are their new details: 17, rue du Pont-aux-Choux, 75003 PARIS. Tel: +331 44 59 29 89, Fax: + 331 44 59 29 80, Mac 44 59 29 86, PC 44 59 29 87. Katie Rickards, in the Secretary General's Office at the IS has the full list of individuals' direct numbers, so please contact her if you need it.

NEWS INITIATIVES - INTERNAL

INTERNATIONAL NEWS RELEASES

Pakistan - 7 December - SEE NEWS SERVICE 137

****India - 15 December** - PLEASE NOTE ** The document is on "disappearances" in Jammu and Kashmir and Punjab, and is our first document specifically on Jammu and Kashmir for some time. Obviously, this report is an important part of the campaign on political killings and campaigns, and one of the 23 "Lives" is featured in the report, and it is important that we get good worldwide publicity on the news release. Please bear in mind that this document is embargoed for 15 December and do what you can to ensure that your campaign work does not put this embargo at risk. Thank you.

TARGETED AND LIMITED NEWS RELEASES

South Africa - 1 December - SEE NEWS SERVICE 151

Human Rights Day Speech - 9 December - SEE NEWS SERVICE 138

FORTHCOMING NEWS INITIATIVES 1994

Tunisia - 12 January

USA death penalty - 26 January Open letter to Bill Clinton, around anniversary of his inauguration as President. News item planned.

South Africa - 16 February ** PLEASE NOTE NEW DATE, WHICH IS STILL TO BE CONFIRMED **

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

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BURUNDI: KILLINGS CONTINUE A MONTH AFTER COUP ATTEMPT

Killings of civilians continue to be reported in Burundi, one month after an attempted coup by the country's army sparked off intercommunal massacres between the majority Hutu and the historically powerful Tutsi ethnic groups.

Humanitarian organizations in the country have estimated that tens of thousands have been killed by both armed civilians and members of the security forces. The Belgian branch of *Médecins sans frontière*, an international non-governmental medical organization, has reported that about 4,000 people wounded in the violence have been treated inside Burundi and many more injured people are still in hiding without medical attention.

In addition, about 700,000 people have fled to neighbouring countries and a further 15,000 are displaced within Burundi. Some villagers who have attempted to return to their homes in search of food, due to insufficient food supplies in refugee camps, have been shot and wounded or killed by soldiers, or lynched by other civilians.

The killings are going on both in the capital, Bujumbura, and in the provinces. Tutsi civilians have killed Hutu either in self-defence or in revenge attacks for the killing of Tutsi. Tutsi members and former members of the security forces have also participated in attacks on Hutu or failed to intervene to stop the violence.

Although most soldiers are reported to have returned to the barracks, there have been reports of bodies of civilians being found subsequently with bullet or bayonet wounds, indicating that soldiers were responsible for killing them. Former soldiers are also reported to be leading Tutsi attacks on Hutu villagers. Apart from guarding camps of displaced people inside Burundi, the army is not known to have taken any action to prevent the killings.

One Burundi human rights group reports that even in Bujumbura killings are being reported virtually on a daily basis. For example, five people were killed in Bujumbura's Cibitoke suburb on the night of 22 November. "If these killings are being reported in the capital, we expect the situation in the countryside to be worse", an official of the group told Amnesty International. With their lives in danger, members of human rights groups are unable to go to the provinces to assess the human rights and humanitarian situation there.

Within the first few hours of the failed coup on 21 October 1993, soldiers, the majority of whom come from the minority Tutsi ethnic group, executed President Melchior Ndadaye and several other key ministers and leaders of the National Assembly. In retaliation members of President Ndadaye's majority Hutu ethnic group began attacks and killings of Tutsi. Some Hutu who did not support President Ndadaye's *Front pour la démocratie au Burundi* (FRODEBU), Front for Democracy in Burundi, which won elections in June 1993, are also reported to have been targeted.

Surviving members of the government took refuge in the French Embassy and after soldiers who had killed President Ndadaye failed to establish a grip on power, re-emerged as the country's government. However, the government has been without the means to set up any mechanisms to investigate or prevent further killings and other human rights violations. The government has said that it cannot

trust the army for protection, despite assurances by army commanders. Government ministers recently moved from the French Embassy to an hotel where they are protected by 15 French soldiers and a group of Burundi soldiers.

The government has asked the United Nations (UN) and the Organization of African Unity (OAU) to send a military peacekeeping force to Burundi to protect remaining members of the government and re-establish security in the country. The UN has declined to be involved militarily, but has agreed to send civilian observers to Burundi. The UN Secretary General has appointed Ahmedou Ould Abdallah, a former Minister of Foreign Affairs in Mauritania, as his special representative to Burundi. The OAU has announced it will send 180 soldiers and 20 civilians to constitute an International Force for Stabilization and Confidence Building, apparently mainly financed by the UN. The OAU Secretary General has appointed Senegalese Ambassador Louis Fall as his representative in Burundi. It is unclear whether the UN and the OAU see the prevention of further killings and other human rights violations as part of their work in Burundi.

Following the military uprising and killings on 21 October, no more than eight soldiers are reported to have been arrested and detained at Bujumbura's Mpimba prison, on the orders of the military procurator (*Auditeur militaire*) at the end of October. They are accused of "attempting to murder the head of state" (*attentat à la vie du chef de l'Etat*). Independent sources have informed Amnesty International that most of those arrested are non-commissioned officers who do not appear to have been involved in planning the coup, but rather carried out orders given to them by their commanders. No commanders are known to have been arrested and some of the ringleaders are reported to have fled the country. Only two of those arrested have been interrogated and the military authorities, who deny involvement in the coup, do not appear to have carried out any wider investigations. Apparently still fearing for their lives, the civilian judicial authorities have not carried out any investigations and neither the government nor the military authorities have requested them to do so. However the government has insisted that members of the security forces responsible for the coup and the murder of the President and other government officials will not be given an amnesty, as the coup leaders had demanded, and will be brought to justice.

Amnesty International is concerned that inadequate steps have been taken by the military authorities to prevent further killings and to make members of the armed forces accountable for their actions as required by the United Nations Principles on the Effective Prevention and Investigation of Extra-Legal, Arbitrary and Summary Executions. The human rights organization is also concerned at the apparent lack of effective action by the international community to whom the government has appealed to bring an end to the violence. The organization is urging the UN and the OAU to put their human rights, humanitarian or conflict resolution mechanisms at the disposal of the Burundi government to end bloodshed in the country and to ensure that those responsible for the killings and other human rights violations are brought to justice.

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TURKEY: FEARS OF IMMINENT RESUMPTION OF EXECUTIONS AFTER NINE-YEAR MORATORIUM

Amnesty International is seriously concerned about reports that for the first time in over nine years the Judicial Commission of the Turkish parliament has approved a death sentence. This move opens the way for what would be the first execution in Western Europe in over nine years.

On 17 November, nine out of 15 members of the Judicial Commission (Adalet Komisyonu) approved the death sentence of Seyfettin Uzundiz, who was reportedly convicted in 1992 of murder and armed robbery. His file will now be sent to the Turkish Grand National Assembly (TBMM - the parliament) for approval, which requires a simple majority. Execution is by hanging and could be carried out immediately the death sentence has been ratified by parliament.

The last executions in Turkey in October 1984 provoked an international outcry. Since then there has been a *de facto* moratorium on executions, as the Grand National Assembly did not vote on any death sentences brought before it for ratification. However, death sentences continued to be imposed.

Under the Anti-Terror Law, passed in April 1991, hundreds of pending death sentences were commuted to terms of imprisonment, a move warmly welcomed by Amnesty International. The Grand National Assembly had already amended the penal code in November 1990, reducing the number of offences punishable by death from 29 to 13.

Said Amnesty International: "We had hoped that the moratorium, the commutations and the reduction in the number of capital crimes were steps on the way to complete abolition of the death penalty, bringing Turkey into line with the rest of Western Europe and, increasingly, Eastern Europe. Instead, it now looks very much as if Turkey is taking a step backwards.

"The reintroduction of the death penalty would be a serious blow for human rights, in a country which already has an appalling record of torture, "disappearances" and political killings."

Amnesty International is also concerned because the 13 offences which currently carry the death sentence in Turkey include political offences, such as separatism. The Turkish state and its security forces are engaged in "total war" against guerrillas of the outlawed Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK), fighting initially for an independent Kurdish state and more recently for some degree of Kurdish autonomy.

Hundreds of Kurdish people are standing trial in State Security Courts, accused of belonging to, or supporting, the PKK, and a number of death sentences have been handed down in recent months as the first of these trials came to an end. Many more can be expected to be imposed, and the State Prosecutor in Ankara is currently seeking to have the immunity of 17 Kurdish members of parliament lifted so that they can also be tried on charges of separatism, under Article 125 of the Turkish Penal Code, which carries a mandatory death sentence on conviction.

Armed activities by the guerrillas have steadily increased since they carried out their first attack in 1984 and so has the response by the security forces, leading to the loss of more than 10,000 lives and an equally steady increase in human rights abuses by both sides. In July

1993, the Turkish Government declared all-out war on the Kurdish insurgents in the southeast where 10 provinces have been under emergency rule since Martial Law was lifted there in 1987.

In the present political climate, the lobby in favour of the death penalty in Turkey is very vocal and public opinion is said to be moving in the same direction. The Prosecutor at Ankara State Security Court, which tries political offences, recently stated that in his opinion all death sentences should be carried out. It appears that ratification of the death sentence of Seyfettin Uzundiz could serve effectively to clear the way for the execution of people convicted of politically-motivated offences as well as those sentenced for other crimes.

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