

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Fear for safety

4 January 1995

BURUNDI

Déogratias Sindaruhunga

Amnesty International is gravely concerned at reports that Déogratias Sindaruhunga has been arbitrarily arrested, then transferred to the military camp in Bubanza province, where he may be at risk of torture and extrajudicial execution.

Reports indicate that he was arrested on 22 December 1994 while trying to separate two men who were in a fight in his home district of Mpanda in Bubanza province. These two men, together with a third man who was standing aside, then took him to local authorities who detained him. He was allegedly held at Musigati where he remained in a civilian prison for some days. However it appears that the local authorities later handed him over to soldiers who took him to the military camp of Bubanza. He was seen there by local people on 30 December. It is not clear if he has been charged.

Amnesty International believes that Déogratias Sindaruhunga may have been moved to military custody solely on account of his belonging to the majority Hutu ethnic group. The security forces in Burundi are dominated by members of the Tutsi ethnic group and have been responsible for perpetrating human rights violations including torture and extrajudicial execution against Hutu civilians.

In November 1991 dozens of members of the Hutu ethnic group, including members of Déogratias Sindaruhunga's family, were tortured and extrajudicially executed at Bubanza military camp.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Violence engulfed most of Burundi in the aftermath an attempted coup in October 1993 during which the country's first democratically elected president, Melchior Ndadaye, was killed by soldiers. Over 50,000 civilian people were killed: Tutsi were killed by Hutu gangs, Hutu civilians were executed by security forces. Ethnic disturbances and killings continued in 1994. Violence reached a recent climax in Bujumbura in December 1994, costing the lives of tens of people.

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

- expressing concern at the reported transfer of Déogratias Sindaruhunga to the military camp in Bubanza province in late December 1994;
- seeking assurances that he is not being ill-treated and is not at risk of extrajudicial execution;
- urging the military authorities to transfer him to civilian custody;
- urging that, if he is not to be charged with a recognizably criminal offence, he should be released.

APPEALS TO

1) President:
Son Excellence Le Président
Sylvestre NTIBANTUNGANYA
Président de la République

Présidence de la République

BP 1870, Bujumbura

République du Burundi

Telegrams: President Ntibantunganya, Bujumbura, Burundi

Telexes: 5036 PRESIBU BDI

Faxes: + 257 22 64 24

Salutation: Monsieur le Président de la République/Dear President

2) Army Chief of Staff:

Lt.-Col Jean BIKOMAGU

Chef d'Etat-major général des Forces Armées

Etat-major général des Forces Armées

Ministère de la Défense nationale

Bujumbura

République du Burundi

Telegrams: CEMG Bikomagu, Bujumbura, Burundi

Faxes: + 257 22 21 48

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

3) The Military Camp Authorities:

Monsieur le Commandant

Camp militaire de Bubanza

Bubanza

République du Burundi

Telegrams: Commandant, Camp militaire, Bubanza, Burundi

Salutation: Monsieur le Commandant / Dear Commander

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

Monsieur Anatole KANYENKIKO

Premier Ministre

Présidence de la République

BP 2800

Bujumbura

République du Burundi

Fax: + 257 22 64 24

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 20 February 1995.