

EXTERNAL

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Fear for safety

1 April 1996

BURUNDI Félix Nzitibanje, teacher

Félix Nzitibanje, a teacher at the *Collège de Buyenzi* in Bujumbura, has not been seen since 23 February 1996, when he was abducted from the Ministry of Civil Service, *Ministère de la Fonction publique*. The abduction is believed to have been carried out by a militia with the collusion of members of the security forces and other government officials. The reason for the abduction is not known.

Amnesty International is extremely concerned for Félix Nzitibanje's safety and is urgently calling on the Burundi authorities to establish and make public his whereabouts.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Burundi has been in a state of civil war since 21 October 1993 when President Melchior Ndadaye was killed by government soldiers during a coup attempt. Increasingly in the armed conflict, the security forces, armed political groups and politicians on both sides, are deliberately targeting education establishments, instigating and using violence in schools and churches to destroy the capacity of their opponents to become leaders or peace-makers. The killings are politically motivated and usually take place along ethnic lines between members of the majority Hutu and minority Tutsi ethnic groups.

Students and teachers have been the victims of deliberate and arbitrary killings and other human rights abuses. In a cycle of violence and impunity, educators and students have also been involved in inciting violence and human rights abuses. Amnesty International has documented this pattern of human rights abuses in a report entitled *Burundi: Targeting students, teachers and clerics in the fight for supremacy* (AFR 16/14/95, September 1995).

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

- calling on the authorities to urgently establish and make public the whereabouts of Félix Nzitibanje following his abduction on 23 February 1996 from the Ministry of Civil Service, and calling for immediate steps to guarantee his physical safety;
- asking for information on the reason for the abduction;
- urging the authorities to promptly investigate this abduction and to bring to justice any officials who have carried out or condoned this or other abductions, unlawful secret detentions or "disappearances" and to take effective measures to prevent any such human rights abuses in the future;

if possible, also:

- demand that the Burundi government authorities investigate all reports of human rights abuses and ensure that those responsible are brought to trial, regardless of their political or ethnic affiliation;
- call on the authorities to ensure that members of the security forces do not participate in or condone human rights abuses and that they take action within the law to prevent such abuses against unarmed civilians.

APPEALS TO:

1. Minister of Justice
Monsieur Gérard NGENDABANKA
Ministre de la Justice

et Garde des sceaux
Ministère de la Justice
BP 1880, Bujumbura, République du Burundi
Faxes: +257 22 2148
Telegrams: Ministre de la Justice, Bujumbura, Burundi
Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre / Dear Minister

2. Gendarmerie Chief of Staff
Colonel Pascal SIMBANDUKU
Chef de l'Etat-major général de la gendarmerie
Etat-major général de la gendarmerie
Ministère de la Défense nationale
Bujumbura, République du Burundi
Telegrams: CEMG Simbanduku, Bujumbura, Burundi
Salutation: Monsieur le Chef d'Etat-major / Dear Chief of Staff

3. Minister for the Civil Service
Monsieur Vincent NDIKUMASABO
Ministre de la Fonction publique
Ministère de la Fonction publique
Bujumbura, République du Burundi
Telegrams: Ministre de la Fonction publique, Bujumbura, Burundi
Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre / Dear Minister

4. Minister of Education
Monsieur Liboire NGENDAHAYO
Ministre de l'Enseignement secondaire
supérieur et de la Recherche scientifique
Ministère de l'Enseignement
Bujumbura, République du Burundi
Telegrams: Ministre de l'Enseignement Ngendahayo, Bujumbura, Burundi
Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre / Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

1. Head of State
Son Excellence
le Président Sylvestre NTIBANTUNGANYA
Président de la République
Présidence de la République
BP 1870, Bujumbura, République du Burundi
Faxes: +257 22 7490

2. Prime Minister
Monsieur Antoine NDUWAYO
Premier Ministre
Présidence de la République
BP 2800, Bujumbura, République du Burundi
Faxes: +257 22 64 24

3. Minister for Human Rights
Madame Marcienne MUJAWAHA
Ministre des Droits de la Personne
humaine, de l'Action sociale et de la Promotion de la femme
Ministère des Droits de la Personne humaine,
de l'Action sociale et de la Promotion de la femme

BP 2690, Bujumbura, République du Burundi
Faxes: +257 21 51 79 or 23 31 39

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 15 May 1996.