

EXTERNAL

AI Index: AFR 16/21/97

20 June 1997

Further information on UA 75/97 (AFR 16/06/97, 19 March 1997) and follow-ups (AFR 16/10/97, 26 March, AFR 16/12/97, 21 April) - Fear of ill-treatment / Torture / Possible prisoners of conscience / Health concern

BURUNDI **Reverend Eliezer Ntunzwenimana**

**New names: Reverend Faustin Nkurinzizi
Reverend Jean-Pierre Mandende**

Amnesty International has received confirmation of the unconditional release of Reverend Eliezer Ntunzwenimana on 27 May 1997. He was severely beaten on his arms and legs during his detention at the *Brigade spéciale de recherche* (BSR), Special Investigation Unit in Bujumbura.

Reverend Ntunzwenimana, a member of the *Union des Eglises baptistes du Burundi*, Union of Baptist Churches in Burundi, was arrested on 7 March 1997 and accused of providing assistance - medical care and blankets - to Hutu armed groups after medical supplies and blankets were found at his compound. Another member of the *Union des Eglises baptistes du Burundi*, Reverend Emmanuel Ndayiziga, was arrested on 15 March 1997 and released uncharged on 19 March 1997 (see original UA and previous updates).

This Urgent Action had previously referred to a third pastor from the same church who was reported to have been arrested on or around 15 March 1997. Amnesty International has not been able to confirm these reports, but has learned that two other clergymen are in detention.

Reverend Faustin Nkurinziza, another member of the *Union des Eglises baptistes du Burundi*, was arrested on 2 April 1997 and accused of involvement in a series of mine explosions in Bujumbura. He has been tortured, apparently in an attempt to extract information.

Another church official, Reverend Jean-Pierre Mandende, a Protestant minister, was also arrested in early April and accused of possession of mines. Amnesty International has not received confirmation that mines were found in his possession. He, too, is reported to have been tortured during interrogation.

Amnesty International remains concerned for the safety of both Reverend Faustin Nkurinziza and Reverend Jean-Pierre Mandende.

FURTHER RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/faxes in French or your own language:

- welcoming the release of Reverend Eliezer Ntunzwenimana, but expressing concern at his ill-treatment during detention;
- expressing concern at the reported torture of Reverends Faustin Nkurinziza and Jean-Pierre Mandende, held at the detention centre of the *Brigade spéciale de recherche* (BSR) in Bujumbura;
- calling for urgent steps to guarantee their safety and seeking assurances that they will be provided with immediate and adequate medical care, and allowed full access to their families, legal counsel and representatives of humanitarian organisations;
- seeking clarification of the reasons for their arrest and continued detention, and calling for their immediate release if they are not to be charged with recognizably criminal offences in accordance with proper legal procedures;

- urging that all allegations of torture and ill-treatment be immediately investigated and for anyone found responsible to be brought to justice in accordance with international standards for fair trial;

NOTE: no mail is getting through to Burundi at present.

APPEALS TO:

Minister for Internal Affairs and Public Security

Lt-Col. Epitace BAYAGANAKANDI

Ministre de l'Intérieur et de la Sécurité Publique

Ministère de l'Intérieur

Telegram: Ministre Interieur, Bujumbura, Burundi

Fax: 257 21 61 02 (via Minister for Human Rights. Ask for your fax to be forwarded to Minister of Internal Affairs))

Salutation : Monsieur le Ministre

President

Major Pierre Buyoya,

Président de la République,

Présidence de la République

Telegrams: President, Bujumbura, Burundi

Fax: 257 22 7490

Salutation: Monsieur le Président

Minister of Defence

Lieutenant-Col. Firmin SINZOYIHEBA

Ministre de la Défense Nationale

Ministère de la Défense

Fax: 257 22 56 86

Telegrams: Ministre Defense, Bujumbura, Burundi

Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre

Head of the BSR

Commandant de la Brigade spéciale de recherche

Telegram: Cmdt, Brigade spéciale de recherche, Bujumbura, Burundi

Salutation: Monsieur le Commandant / Dear Commander

COPIES TO: 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 2 August 1997.