

EXTERNAL

AI Index: AFR 16/26/96

20 August 1996

Further information on UA 202/96 (AFR 16/24/96, 15 August 1996) - Fear of executions/Legal concern

BURUNDI Fimat Niyonkenguruka, former secondary school director

new names: Jackson Hatungimana

Daniel Kabura

Protais Nzohabonimana

Hilaire Hicuburundi

Michel Kabavamho (?)

and about 82 others sentenced to death since February 1996

Amnesty International has received reports that on 9 August 1996, Fimat Niyonkenguruka, sentenced to death on 24 June 1996, and five others on death row named above were transferred to a special cell in Mpimba prison in Bujumbura. The separation took place a day after civil servants meeting government ministers on 8 August had demanded the public hanging of prisoners on death row (see original Urgent Action). Sources in Burundi have expressed fears that the separation of these prisoners from other inmates may be a sign of their imminent execution. There are also fears that they may be subjected to torture and other forms of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. At least two dozen detainees have been killed in custody since 1995; three of these were shot dead in Mpimba prison.

Neither the six prisoners nor their relatives have been informed of the reasons for separating them from the rest of the prison population with whom they had so far been held. It is unclear whether the separation of these death row prisoners has also been imposed on about 82 others held in other prisons around the country.

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

- expressing concern at reports that six prisoners (name them) have been separated from others in Mpimba prison, thus raising fears that they may be executed in the near future or subjected to torture and other forms of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment;
- asking if prisoners on death row elsewhere in the country have been separated from others in the same way, and requesting to be informed of the identities of those prisoners and the prisons where they are being held;
- seeking assurances that no prisoners will be subjected to execution, torture or other forms of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment;
- requesting the authorities to allow the prisoners access to visits by legal counsel, their relatives and members of humanitarian and human rights organizations;
- demanding that the Supreme Court respond to appeals on behalf of the prisoners and that the appeals be heard in conditions that conform to international standards of fair trial;
- urging that if the convictions are confirmed by the Supreme Court, it should sentence them to humane punishment, not the death penalty.

APPEALS TO:

President

Major Pierre Buyoya
 Président de la République
 Présidence de la République
 BP 1870, Bujumbura, BURUNDI
Fax: 257 22 7490
Telegrams: Major Buyoya, Bujumbura, Burundi
Salutation: Monsieur le Président/Dear President

Prime Minister

Monsieur Pascal-Firmin Ndimira
 Premier Ministre
 Présidence de la République
 BP 2800, Bujumbura, BURUNDI
Fax: 257 22 6424
Telegrams: Premier Ministre Ndimira, Bujumbura, Burundi
Salutation: Monsieur le Premier Ministre/Dear Prime Minister

Minister of Justice

Gervais Rubashamiheto
 Ministre de la Justice et Garde des sceaux
 Ministère de la Justice
 BP 1880, Bujumbura, BURUNDI
Fax: 257 22 2148
Telegrams: Ministre Rubashamiheto, Bujumbura, Burundi
Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre/Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

Madame Christine Ruhaza
 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
 BP 2690, Bujumbura, BURUNDI
Fax: 257 21 51 79 or 257 23 31 39

Eugène Nindorera
 Ministre de la Réforme des institutions
 Ministère de la Réforme des institutions
 Bujumbura, BURUNDI

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 1 October 1996.