

RWANDA Joseph NSENGIYUMVA (m), university student, aged 39

University student Joseph Nsengiyumva "disappeared" on 3 August 2001 after he visited a local government office. He was next seen in mid-September under military guard at a police station in Gisenyi province, where he had been severely ill-treated. He has not been seen since. Rwandese military intelligence services have stated that they have no information about him, but no official investigation is known to have taken place into his "disappearance".

Joseph Nsengiyumva was reportedly seen on 18 September under military guard in Nkamira police station, Mutura district, Gisenyi province, where he was held "in a kind of hole" : he seemed to have been severely ill-treated and was seriously ill. The witness who claimed to have seen him had gone to the police station to visit another detainee. There is a military camp next to the police station.

Joseph Nsengiyumva had been an unsuccessful candidate in the March 2001 local elections in Mutura district and local officials may have considered him a rival. The district mayor had reportedly summoned him for three hours of interrogation before the election.

On 3 August he went to Mutura district office to pick up some official documents. Afterwards he was seen getting into a white jeep, which may have belonged to Mutura district local authority. Attempts to establish his whereabouts were unsuccessful, until his chance sighting in Nkamira.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Reports continue of "disappearances" from security force custody in Rwanda, although the number has gone down from previous years. Some of the "disappeared" have later re-emerged from unofficial or inaccessible detention centres, such as military camps, but others have never been found. Some "disappearances" are linked to the conflict in the neighbouring Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and involve the illegal transfer of detainees across the frontier.

Torture and ill-treatment are commonly reported in military detention and in local detention centres. Reports of detainees being kept under guard in holes dug in the ground are especially common in relation to Rwandese and allied military detention sites in DRC.

UA appeals on the case of Edouard Mpabuka, who "disappeared" from gendarmerie detention in November 1999, prompted a Ministry of Justice investigation which resulted in Edouard Mpabuka being found alive in prison in February 2000.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in English, French or your own language:

- expressing concern for the safety of Joseph Nsengiyumva, who was reportedly seen in custody at Nkamira police station, Mutura district, Gisenyi province, on 18 September 2001;
- expressing concern that Joseph Nsengiyumva was reportedly held in inhumane conditions at Nkamira police station, where he appeared to have been severely ill-treated and was reportedly seriously ill;
- asking the authorities to order a prompt and thorough investigation to establish where Joseph Nsengiyumva is now, and for his family to be informed;

- calling on the authorities to bring to justice any officers responsible for keeping him in unacknowledged detention, ill-treating him or committing any other human rights violation against him.

APPEALS TO:

Some fax numbers may be difficult to reach. Please keep trying!

Major General Paul KAGAME
President
PO Box 15 Kigali, Rwanda
Telegrams: President, Kigali, Rwanda
Faxes: +250 84769 / 84390
e-mails: presirep@rwanda1.com
Salutation: Dear President / Monsieur le Président

Mr Jean de Dieu NTIRUHUNGWA
Minister of Internal Affairs
PO Box 446 Kigali, Rwanda
Faxes: + 250 84373 / 82071/ 83170
Salutation: Dear Minister / Monsieur le Ministre

Colonel Frank MUGAMBAGE
Commander, Rwanda National Police Force
Kigali, Rwanda
Faxes: + 250 86602
Salutation: Dear Commander / Monsieur le Commandant

Brigadier General James KABAREBE
Acting Chief of Staff
Rwandese Patriotic Army
RPA Headquarters
Kigali, Rwanda
Faxes: + 250 72863 / 77992
Salutation: Dear Acting Chief of Staff / Monsieur le Chef d'Etat par intérim

Mr Fidel MITSINDO
Préfet of Gisenyi Province
PO Box 173 Gisenyi, Rwanda
Faxes: + 250 61312
Salutation: Dear Préfet / Monsieur le Préfet

COPIES TO:

Monsieur Gasana NDOBA, President, National Human Rights Commission, PO Box 269
KIGALI, Rwanda
Faxes: + 250 82702

and to diplomatic representatives of Rwanda accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 8 January 2002.