

EXTERNAL

AI Index: AFR 47/09/97

UA 47/97

"Disappearance" / Fear for safety

10 February 1997

RWANDA

Diogene Nyombayire, aged 34, peasant

There are grave concerns for the safety of Diogene Nyombayire, who was arrested in Rwanda at the end of January or early February 1997, after being forcibly returned to Rwanda from Tanzania. His current whereabouts are not known.

Diogene Nyombayire, married with a young child, had fled Rwanda for Burundi on 11 June 1994 to escape widespread killings taking place in Butare, southern Rwanda, in late May and early June 1994. The same evening, on arrival in Burundi, he witnessed the massacre of more than 100 Rwandese asylum-seekers who had fled Rwanda with him. He was one of the few survivors of this massacre carried out by Tutsi civilians with the collusion of Burundi security forces at Mamfu, near Kiri transit centre, in Kirundo province, at the Burundi-Rwanda border. The massacre also reportedly took place in collusion with members of the Rwandese Patriotic Front (RPF).

Later in 1994, he sought refuge in Tanzania. He remained there until December 1996 when he was forcibly returned to Rwanda, along with hundreds of thousands of other Rwandese refugees who had been in Tanzania since 1994.

A few days after his return through Kibungo, in eastern Rwanda, in December 1996, he was threatened by local Rwandese officials, some of whom are alleged to have played a part in the massacre in Burundi which he witnessed on 11 June 1994. The threats reportedly referred to the events he had witnessed in Burundi. About one month later, he was arrested. His place of detention is not known.

Amnesty International has grave fears for the safety of Diogene Nyombayire and believes his life may be at risk.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

During the genocide in Rwanda, as many as one million people were killed between April and July 1994 by the former Rwandese armed forces and allied militia.

Soldiers of the Rwandese Patriotic Front (RPF) - who went on to form the present government of Rwanda - were also responsible for killing thousands of unarmed civilians.

In December 1996, Tanzania forcibly expelled hundreds of thousands of Rwandese refugees who had fled there in 1994 in the aftermath of the genocide in Rwanda. Several thousand of these returnees have since been arrested, many on suspicion of having participated in the genocide in Rwanda in 1994. There have also been increasingly frequent reports of killings and "disappearances" of returnees throughout January 1997.

In 1994, an Amnesty International delegation to Burundi spoke to survivors of the massacre at Mamfu near Kiri, which took place on 11 June 1994. These investigations confirmed that the massacre of more than 100 Rwandese asylum-seekers had been carried out by Tutsi civilians in collusion with the Burundi security forces and that at least one RPF soldier was present during the massacre. The victims of this massacre, who were mostly believed to be Hutu, were alleged to have been members of Rwanda's *Interahamwe* "death squads", responsible for mass killings of Tutsi during the genocide in Rwanda. However, investigations carried out by Amnesty International at the time provided no

evidence of links between these asylum-seekers and the mass killings in Rwanda (see News service 184/94, AI Index NWS 16/WU 10/94).

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

- asking for information on the whereabouts of Diogene Nyombayire and on the specific reasons for his arrest;
- expressing fears for his safety in the light of the fact that he is one of the few survivors of the massacre at Mamfu near Kiri, in Burundi in June 1994;
- asking for assurances that he will not be ill-treated and that his safety will be guaranteed;
- calling for his immediate and unconditional release unless he is to be charged with a recognizably criminal offence.

APPEALS TO:

President
Pasteur BIZIMUNGU -
Président de la République
Présidence de la République
BP 15, KIGALI, Rwanda
Fax: 250-84769
Telegram: President, Kigali, Rwanda
Salutation: Monsieur le Président / Dear President

Général Major Paul KAGAME
Vice-Président de la République et Ministre de la Défense
Présidence de la République
BP 23, KIGALI, Rwanda
Fax: 250-72431/76969
Telegrams: Vice-President Kagame, Kigali, Rwanda
Salutation: Monsieur le Vice-Président / Dear Vice-President

Colonel Alexis KANYARENGWE
Minister of the Interior
BP 446, KIGALI, Rwanda
fax: 250-84373/83374
Telegrams: Interior Minister, Kigali, Rwanda
Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre / Dear Minister

Monsieur Patrick MAZIMHAKA
Ministre de la Réhabilitation et de l'Intégration sociale
Ministère de la Réhabilitation et de l'Intégration sociale
BP 2034, KIGALI, Rwanda
Fax: 250-72338
Telegams: Ministre Mazimhaka, Kigali, Rwanda
Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre / Dear Minister

COPIES 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 30 March 1997.