

PUBLIC

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Further information on UA 104/00 (AFR 47/16/00, 4 May 2000) - Fear of "Disappearance" / Fear of ill-treatment and torture

DRC/RWANDA Bruno Bahati, civil society activist

Bruno Bahati is now being held in a military detention centre notorious for torture known as "*Chien méchant*" (Dangerous Dog) in Goma, eastern DRC. He is being held in incommunicado detention and has not been seen since his transfer. Conditions of detention in "*Chien méchant*" are also very harsh.

Bruno Bahati was transferred to Goma by the Rwandese authorities who handed him over to the Rwandese-backed *Rassemblement congolais pour la démocratie* (RCD), Congolese Rally for Democracy authorities, who control the area. He has been in detention in Goma ever since. Amnesty International has not been able to confirm the exact date of his transfer but believes that he has been in Goma for at least one month.

Bruno Bahati was arrested at the Rwanda-Uganda border on 22 April 2000 as he returned from a civil society conference in the government-held DRC capital, Kinshasa. He has not been officially charged although investigations are apparently continuing into the allegations against him. He is reported to be accused of links with armed groups opposed to the RCD and their foreign allies, although the basis of the allegation is unclear, and may stem only from his attendance at the conference in Kinshasa. Following his arrest, he was held in military detention in Kigali. Human rights groups and others who tried to visit him in detention were repeatedly denied access and the right to talk with him.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The current armed conflict in the DRC began in August 1998 when the RCD, supported by Rwandese and Ugandan forces, launched a rebellion against the new government of Laurent Désiré Kabila. In May 1999, however, the RCD itself split into two factions, RCD-Goma (allied to Rwanda) and RCD-Kisangani (allied to Uganda), which are now fighting each other as well as the government. The DRC is now effectively split three ways between the government, RCD-Goma and RCD-Kisangani. Both factions of the RCD and their allies are also fighting against several *Mayi-Mayi* armed groups, who are opposed to all foreign troops.

The RCD and their allies have failed to secure popular support, in part because they have carried out widespread unlawful killings and other human rights abuses against unarmed civilians suspected of supporting the DRC Government and local armed groups. Rwandese political, military and economic control over RCD-Goma has remained a source of discord within the armed opposition group.

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

- expressing concern that Bruno Bahati has been moved to a military detention centre in Goma, DRC, where he is at risk of torture;
- stating that Amnesty International considers the Rwandese authorities to be responsible for his continued detention and his well-being;
- calling for the Rwandese authorities to order his immediate and unconditional release;
- for as long as his detention continues, calling for him to be protected from torture and ill-treatment;

- calling for him to be given immediate access to his family, medical care and legal counsel, as well as human rights and humanitarian organizations.

If you are able, please raise the following additional points:

- seeking clarification on the legal grounds of his detention in Rwanda and subsequent transfer to Goma;
- asking what assurances were sought to ensure that he would not be subjected to ill-treatment in DRC before his transfer to Goma.

APPEALS TO:

President

Major General Paul KAGAME

Président

Présidence de la République

BP 15, KIGALI

Rwanda

Telegrams: President, Kigali, Rwanda

Fax: +250-84769/84390

Salutation: Dear President / Monsieur le Président

Minister of Defence

Colonel Emmanuel HABYARIMANA

Ministre de la Défense

Ministère de la Défense

BP 23, KIGALI

Rwanda

Fax: +250-72431/76969

Salutation: Dear Minister / Monsieur le Ministre

Telegram: Ministre Defense, Kigali, Rwanda

Minister of Justice and Institutional Relations

Monsieur Jean de Dieu MUCYO

Ministre de la Justice et des Relations institutionnelles

Ministère de la Justice

BP 160 KIGALI

Rwanda

Fax: +250-86509

Salutation: Dear Minister / Monsieur le Ministre

Telegram: Ministre Justice, Kigali, Rwanda

President, RCD Goma

Maître Ilunga

Président du Rassemblement Congolais pour la

Democratie

Goma

Democratic Republic of Congo

Fax: + 871 761850629 (please note, you may have difficulty getting through on this number)

Salutation: Monsieur le Président / Dear President

COPIES TO:

Gasana Ndoba

President of the National Human Rights Commission

BP 269, KIGALI

Rwanda

Fax: +250 82702

and to diplomatic representatives of the DRC and Rwanda accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 31 July 2000.