

PUBLIC

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19 January 1999

Further information on UA 08/99 (AFR 62/03/99, 13 January 1999) -
"Disappearance"/fear of torture and new concern: Fear of extrajudicial execution

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO Christophe Bintu
Bienvenu Kasole
about 25 Tutsi civilians

Some of those arrested by the *Forces armées congolaises* (FAC), Congolese Armed Forces, on 12 January 1999 at the *Centre Béthanie* were shown on television on the main national evening news on 17 January. The group was apparently filmed in detention at Kinshasa's main military camp, Kokolo. A military spokesman claimed that the *Centre Béthanie* was being used by enemy forces as a base to infiltrate the capital, and said military equipment had been seized at the centre. Those in detention, who include women and children, were described as enemy agents.

It is not clear if the two human rights activists, Christophe Bintu and Bienvenu Kasole, are also being held at Camp Kokolo.

Several hundred Tutsi have been detained at Camp Kokolo since the outbreak of armed conflict in August 1998. Some of those in the camp claim to have witnessed the execution of several co-detainees in the camp and fear further such extrajudicial executions.

AI is concerned that many of those held in camp Kokolo may be prisoners of conscience, held solely on account of their ethnic origins and that their lives could be at risk.

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

- asking to be told the names of those arrested at the *Centre Béthanie*, currently held at Camp Kokolo, and the exact whereabouts of Christophe Bintu and Bienvenu Kasole;
- expressing concern at reports of extra-judicial executions of Tutsi in Camp Kokolo during 1998 and asking for a full independent inquiry into these allegations;
- seeking assurances that those arrested at the *Centre Béthanie* are not subjected to ill-treatment and that they are allowed access to legal and medical assistance at all times;
- seeking assurances that no-one is being held solely on account of their ethnic origins and that charges be promptly made or detainees released unconditionally;
- reminding the government of the DRC of its commitment to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in particular Article 19: "Everyone has the right to freedom of expression".

APPEALS TO:

President Laurent-Désiré KABILA
Président de la République, Présidence de la République
Kinshasa-Ngaliema, Democratic Republic of Congo

Telegrams: Président, Kinshasa, DR Congo

Faxes: + 243 88 02120

Salutation: Monsieur le Président de la République / Dear President

Minister for the Interior, M. Gaëtan KAKUDJI
Ministre d'Etat, Ministre
de l'Intérieur
Ministère de l'Interieur
Kinshasa-Gombe, Democratic Republic of Congo
République Démocratique du Congo
Telexes: Ministre Kakudji, Kinshasa, DR Congo

COPIES TO:

Minister for Human Rights, M. Léonard She Okitundu
Ministre des Droits de l'Homme, Kinshasa-Gombe, DR Congo
Telegrams: Ministre Droits de l'Homme, Kinshasa, DR Congo
Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre / Dear Minister

and to diplomatic representatives of the Democratic Republic of Congo accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 2 March 1999.

"Everyone has the right to freedom of expression"

Article 19, Universal Declaration of Human Rights

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