

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL'S CALL FOR INVESTIGATIONS IN BURUNDI

Burundi is still caught in a cycle of violence. Hundreds of unarmed civilians have been extrajudicially executed by the Burundian army, and scores of unarmed civilians have been deliberately and arbitrarily killed by armed opposition groups since November 1998. The following killings of civilians should be investigated impartially as a priority, and those responsible must be brought to justice:

· **3 November 1998: Up to 165 civilians killed in Bujumbura Rural province**

Up to 165 unarmed civilians were reportedly extrajudicially executed on 3 November 1998 by government soldiers in Rutovo and Busenge, Mutambu commune, Rural Bujumbura province. At least 59 children were among the victims. On 10 November 1998, the government announced that an investigation would be launched, and two officers were arrested in connection with the killings. Although the government Commission of Inquiry does not appear to have been able to carry out its work, investigations by the Military Prosecutor's office have reportedly taken place. However by April 1999 the two officers in detention had not been formally charged, and the results of the investigations are not known. Amnesty International welcomes the fact that the authorities have opened an investigation and calls upon the government to provide public information on the progress of this investigation, and for those responsible to be brought to justice.

· **4 January 1999: At least 55 civilians killed in Bujumbura Rural province**

At least 55 unarmed civilians were reportedly killed on Kimina *colline*, Mubone *commune*, by members of the government army on 4 January 1999. Soldiers reportedly grouped together the population in the area - which had in theory be cleared of the civilian population - and separated the men from the women and children. The men were killed and their bodies burnt. At least two women and two young girls were also among those killed. It has been generally acknowledged by government officials that a number of extrajudicial executions may have taken place on 4 January on Kimina *colline*, but no investigation is reported to have taken place. On the night of 11 January 1999, the local official of the zone, T rence Banciriminse, was extrajudicially executed by soldiers. He had publicly accused soldiers of being responsible for the massacre. Amnesty International calls upon the government to immediately start investigations into the killings of 55 unarmed civilians on 4 January 1999 and into the killing of T rence Banciriminse.

· **13-14 January 1999: At least 36 civilians killed in Makamba province**

At least 36 unarmed civilians were killed in Mabanda and Kibago communes, reportedly by members of an armed opposition group, the *Forces pour la défense de la démocratie* (FDD) on 13 and 14 January 1999. Those killed are reported to have included people suspected of collaborating with the government against the FDD. The victims also included at least nine children. Amnesty International calls upon the FDD to investigate the killings, to hold accountable those responsible for human rights abuses and to take steps to prevent further abuses.

· **19-20 January 1999: At least 76 civilians killed in Makamba province**

On 19 and 20 January 1999, at least 76 unarmed civilians were reported to have been killed on Muresi and Murango *collines*, Makamba commune, Makamba province. The killings followed military activities by the FDD in the area. While the government has accused armed groups of being responsible for the killings, many survivors and independent sources have stated that the government army was responsible for the killings. Amnesty International calls upon the authorities to immediately start an independent and impartial investigation into the killings. Those responsible must be brought to justice.

· **18 February 1999: seven civilians killed in Bubanza province**

On 18 February, four women and three men, apparently all civilians, were killed by insurgents near to Nihangaza displaced camp in Bubanza province. According to local sources, the attack was carried out by the *Forces nationales pour la libération* (FNL), the armed wing of the Hutu opposition party, the *Parti pour la libération du peuple hutu* (PALIPEHUTU). Amnesty International calls upon the FNL to investigate the killings, to hold those responsible accountable and take steps to prevent further abuses.

Amnesty International calls on the Burundi authorities to investigate all reports of killings of unarmed civilians by the security forces. Those found responsible must be brought to justice and tried in accordance with international fair trial standards. Amnesty International also calls on the armed opposition groups in Burundi to investigate all reports of killings of unarmed civilians by armed opposition groups, to hold accountable those responsible for human rights abuses and to take steps to prevent further abuses.

For more detailed information about human rights abuses in Burundi, see:

Burundi, *Justice on trial* (AI Index AFR 16/13/98), 30 July 1998;
Burundi, *Insurgency and counter-insurgency perpetuate human rights abuses*
(AI Index AFR 16/34/98), 19 November 1998;
Burundi, *No respite without justice* (AI Index 16/xx/99), xxx

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