

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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"Disappearance"

6 May 1994

BURUNDI

Denis Niragira
Pierre-Claver Ningarukye
Thadée Nkerabahizi
Venerand Birantevye
Amede Karegwa
Jean-Pierre Bukuru
Nicholas Matata Nahimana
Ngoyi (Zairian national)
Leonidas Nyandwi

The nine people named above are reported to have "disappeared" after being arrested on 29 April 1994 by members of the security forces. They were detained at a playground in Kamenge, a suburb of the capital Bujumbura, where local residents had been assembled. They were then driven away in a truck and have not been seen since.

The arrests occurred as civilians were ordered to leave Kamenge before the armed forces moved into the suburb to search for arms belonging to civilians. The operation was ordered by the government following clashes between armed members of the Hutu and Tutsi ethnic groups earlier this year in Bujumbura.

Those who have since "disappeared" were apparently members of the Hutu ethnic group and Zairian nationals in the suburb, suspected of being in possession of arms.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

These "disappearances" occurred in the context of violence which engulfed most of Burundi in the aftermath of an attempted coup last October during which President Melchior Ndadaye was extrajudicially executed by the army.

Although much of the violence had abated by the end of 1993, sporadic killings of Hutu by members of the security forces and between armed Hutu and armed Tutsi civilians have continued, mostly in Bujumbura.

During March 1994 about 500 Hutu civilians were reportedly killed during operations by the armed forces to disarm civilians in Kamenge. In April the authorities issued an ultimatum to armed Hutu civilians to surrender their weapons or be attacked. No weapons were surrendered, leading to the operation in Kamenge at the end of April. The army first bombarded the suburb and then searched for the armed civilians. It has been reported that no firearms were recovered and that those arrested had no weapons. The arrests were apparently based on unsubstantiated suspicion or accusation of possessing firearms. Twenty-eight other people also arrested on 29 April are being held by the Gendarmerie in Bujumbura (see UA 180/94, AFR 16/11/94, 6 May 1994).

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

- expressing concern at reports that the nine people above are reported to have "disappeared" following their arrest on 29 April 1994;
- calling on the authorities to establish the whereabouts of these nine people and to make public their place of detention;
- pointing out that according to Burundi's law any arrested person has to be referred to a judicial authority to be charged within a few days of being

arrested;

- urging the authorities to bring to justice any officials responsible for unlawful secret detentions or "disappearances", and to take effective measures to prevent any such "disappearances" in the future.

APPEALS TO

1) President:

Son Excellence

le Président Sylvestre NTIBANTUNGANYA

Président de la République

Présidence de la République

BP 1870, Bujumbura

République du Burundi

Telegrams: President Ntibantunganya, Bujumbura, Burundi

Telexes: 5036 PRESIBU BDI

Faxes: 257 22 6424

Salutation: Monsieur le Président de la République/Dear President

2) Minister of Defence

Col. Gédéon FYIROKO

Ministre de la Défense nationale

Ministère de la Défense nationale

BP 1870, Bujumbura

République du Burundi

Telegrams: Ministre Fyiroko, Bujumbura, Burundi

Faxes: 257 22 21 48

Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre/Dear Minister

3) Army Chief of Staff:

Lt-Col Jean BIKOMAGU

Chef de l'Etat-major général des Forces armées

Etat-major général des Forces armées

Ministère de la Défense nationale

Bujumbura, République du Burundi

Telegrams: CEM Bikomagu, Ministère Defense, Bujumbura, Burundi

Faxes: 257 22 21 48

Salutation: Monsieur le Chef d'Etat-major/Dear Chief of Staff

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

Officer in charge of investigations

Major Dieudonné Nzeyimana

Brigade spéciale de recherche

Gendarmerie nationale

Bujumbura

République du Burundi

Minister for Human Rights

Monsieur Issa NGENDAKUMANA

Ministre des droits de l'homme et des Réfugiés

Ministère des droits de l'homme

Bujumbura, République du Burundi

and to diplomatic representatives of Burundi accredited to your country

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 17 June 1994.