

PUBLIC

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07 November 2006

UA 296/06 Fear of torture/ ill-treatment

BURUNDI **Astère Majambere (m)**
Jean Berchmans Bangirinama (m)
Daniel Ntirandekura (m)
Clément Misigaro (m)
Euphrem Ndayize (m)
Norbert Nkeshimana (m)
Michel Ndagijimana (m)
Onésime Nsengiyumva (m)
Emmanuel Nzeyimana (m)
Narson Ndizeye (m)
Bernard Ndayisenga (m)

The 11 men named above are detained at Ngozi military camp in northern Burundi, on suspicion of their involvement with the National Liberation Forces (*Forces Nationales de Libération*, FNL). The 11 men are held in extremely harsh conditions and are at risk of torture or ill-treatment.

The detainees were arrested on different dates in a number of locations. Daniel Ntikandekura was arrested in March 2006 in the province of Kirundo in northern Burundi. The majority of the other detainees were arrested in the provinces of Bubanza and Kayanza between July and October 2006. The men were initially held at Kayanza military camp but have recently been transferred to Ngozi military camp. The men have not yet been charged with any offence.

Amnesty International has received reports that all the prisoners are being held in harsh conditions. The detainees are allegedly not fed adequately and only receive left-over food from the soldiers at the camp. Their sanitary conditions are reportedly deplorable and fall well below international standards for the treatment of prisoners. Sources have documented how the men have very limited access to drinking water and to toilet facilities. There have been a number of previous reports of torture of detainees held at military camps.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Burundi is emerging from 13 years of civil conflict. A Comprehensive Ceasefire Agreement between the government and the FNL, the last armed group operating in Burundi, was signed on 7 September in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania.

In August 2005, the CNDD-FDD (*Conseil national pour la Défense de la Démocratie - Forces pour la Défense de la Démocratie*, the National Council for the Defence of Democracy – Forces for the Defence of Democracy), the former main opposition armed movement, won the first elections to be held in Burundi since the assassination of President Melchior Ndadaye in October 1993. Since August 2005, Amnesty International and other organisations have documented numerous and widespread human rights violations in Burundi. More than 30 people "disappeared" in the province of Muyinga between May and August 2006, after they were arbitrarily arrested by the military working in alliance with the intelligence services. The authorities alleged that the 30 men were suspected of having links with the FNL. The men were transported to the military camp in Mukoni in the province of Muyinga. In late August, the bodies of 16 of the arrested men were found floating in nearby rivers by local people. The men had reportedly been shot.

For their part, the FNL have allegedly been responsible for ambushes, targeted assassinations, armed robbery and killings which have taken place mainly in the provinces surrounding Bujumbura. Civilians have borne the brunt of this violence.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in English, French or your own language:

- expressing concern for the 11 men (naming them) being held without charge in Ngozi military camp, the majority of whom were arrested from July to October 2006;
- requesting assurances that the Burundian authorities will take immediate steps to alleviate the suffering of these detainees, including the provision of satisfactory sanitary facilities, access to clean water and an adequate supply of food;
- calling for the authorities to protect all the detainees from torture and ill-treatment, and for them to be given immediate access to their families, medical care, lawyers, and to humanitarian and human rights organizations;
- calling on the authorities either to charge these men with a recognizably criminal offence, or release them immediately.

APPEALS TO:

(Please note: The telephone connection between the International Secretariat (London) and Burundi has been poor recently. If you experience problems, please keep trying, or alternatively, use the postal addresses provided.)

President

Président Pierre Nkurunziza

Président de la République

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Rohero I

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Fax: +257 22 74 90

Salutation: Monsieur le Président / Excellence

Minister of National Defence

Général Germain Niyoyankana

Ministre de la Défense Nationale

Ministère de la Défense Nationale

Bujumbura, Burundi

Fax: + 257 21 56 86

Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre / Dear Minister

Governor of Ngozi Province

Monsieur le Gouverneur Félix Niragira

Gouverneur de la Province de Ngozi

Bureau de la province de Ngozi

Ngozi, Burundi

Fax : +257 30 23 40

Salutation: Monsieur le Gouverneur

COPIES 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 19 December 2006.