

**BURUNDI Matenga, farmer**

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Matenga, a rice farmer living near the capital, Bujumbura, was arrested by soldiers on 18 March and taken to an unknown destination. His whereabouts are still unknown, and he is at grave risk of torture or extrajudicial execution.

Matenga lives in Rukaramu, in Mutimbuzi commune. He was visiting two friends in the nearby village of Maramvya when he was arrested. One of the soldiers had recognized that he was not from Maramvya, and accused him of involvement with the armed opposition group, the *Forces nationales de libération* (FNL), National Liberation Forces. The soldiers tied him up and took him away. He has not been seen since.

His family have asked at a number of local gendarmerie places of detention, to which people arrested by the armed forces are sometimes taken. However, they have been too scared to go to the nearest military position, where the soldiers who arrested him apparently came from.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

The FNL, one of the most active Burundian armed opposition groups, launched a sustained assault on Bujumbura on 24 February, and occupied parts of the north of the city for about two weeks before withdrawing around 10 March.

Amnesty International has taken up several cases of people arbitrarily arrested and tortured by the armed forces since the attack, mainly in the Maramvya area. In previous counter-insurgency operations, the Tutsi-dominated security forces have carried out brutal reprisal killings of unarmed Hutu civilians. They have treated civilians as collaborators with the armed opposition, and subjected them to arbitrary arrest, torture and extrajudicial execution.

Torture and ill-treatment are routine in the early stages of detention in Burundi. The problem is particularly acute in military detention, particularly as detainees are often held incommunicado in illegal places of detention and denied access to their families and humanitarian and human rights organizations. The military authorities often refuse to say where detainees are held. They may tell relatives, without explanation, that a detainee has been released or was never in custody, creating fear that the detainee has been killed. In some cases, this fear is well-founded. In others, the detainee may have been transferred to a different place of detention and may subsequently "reappear".

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Matenga, who has not been seen since soldiers arrested him on 18 March in Maramvya;
- asking the authorities to reveal where he is immediately, and to take action to ensure he is not harmed;
- calling for anyone found to have committed or condoned a human rights violation against Matenga to be brought to justice;
- asking the authorities to ensure that the security forces follow proper arrest and detention procedures, and that relatives and lawyers have access to all places of detention.

(Please note, it can be difficult to get through on the numbers given below, and you may be told by the operator that they are temporarily out of order. Please be patient and keep trying):

Head of State

Son Excellence

Major Pierre BUYOYA

Président de la République

Présidence de la République

BP 1870 Bujumbura, Burundi

**Telegrams: President, Bujumbura, Burundi**

**Faxes: + 257 22 74 90**

**Salutation: Monsieur le Président de la République / Dear President**

Minister of National Defence

Colonel Cyrille NDAYIRUKIYE

Ministre de la Défense Nationale

Ministère de la Défense Nationale

BUJUMBURA, Burundi

**Telegrams: Ministre Defense, Bujumbura, Burundi**

**Faxes: + 257 22 56 86**

**Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre / Dear Minister**

Chief of Defence Staff

Général Major Vincent NIYUNGEKO

Chef de l'Etat-major général des Forces armées

Etat-major général des Forces armées

Ministère de la Défense nationale

BP 1870 Bujumbura, Burundi

**Telegram: Chef Etat Major, Forces armées, Bujumbura, Burundi**

**Salutation: Monsieur le Chef de l'Etat-major/Dear Chief of Defence Staff**

**Fax: + 257 22 39 59 / 21 75 05**

Procureur Général de la République

Monsieur Gérard NGENDABANKA

Procureur Général de la République

Bujumbura

Burundi

**Telegrams: Procureur general, Bujumbura, Burundi**

**Fax: + 257 24 15 03**

**Salutation: Monsieur le Procureur général de la République / Dear State Public Prosecutor**

**COPIES TO:**

Minister for Human Rights, Institutional Reform and Relations with the National Assembly

Eugène NINDORERA, Ministre des droits de la Personne humaine, des réformes institutionnelles, et des relations avec l'Assemblée nationale, Ministère des droits de la Personne humaine, des réformes institutionnelles, et des relations avec l'Assemblée nationale, Bujumbura, Burundi

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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 11 May 2001.