

UA 105/01

Fear of t**BURUNDI** Lieutenant NTAKARUTIMANA

Raphaël MANIRAKIZA, PARENA member,

Ildéphonse NDAGIJIMANA, PARENA member, trade union representative

Approximately 40 soldiers

Approximately 40 soldiers and two civilians have been arrested following an apparent coup attempt on 18 April 2001. They are currently being interrogated, and Amnesty International fears they are at risk of torture and ill-treatment.

Between 30 and 40 soldiers are thought to have been involved in the coup attempt although the exact number detained has not been made public. At least two civilians, both with links to the opposition *Parti pour le redressement national* (PARENA), National Recovery Party, were also detained on 21 April. PARENA has since called for the unconditional release of both men and of Lieutenant Ntakarutimana.

The detainees are reportedly held in various places of detention around Bujumbura, including at a gendarmerie special investigation unit, the *Brigade spéciale de Recherche* (BSR) in the capital, Bujumbura, where at least Raphaël Manirakiza and Ildéphonse Ndagijimana are held. Other detainees are held in the cells of the *Police de sécurité publique* (PSP), Public Security Police, the *Police spéciale de Roulage* (PSR), *Special Haulage Police* and the *Police judiciaire des parquets* (PJP), Judicial Police Force, as well as reportedly in military camps including Camp Ngagara. Torture and ill-treatment is frequent in all these places of detention.

On 20 April, the government announced that a Commission of Inquiry had been set up to investigate the attempted coup. It has 20 days to complete its work. Senior government and military officials have warned that the coup plotters could face the death penalty.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

On 18 April, Lieutenant Ntakarutimana and a group of around 40 soldiers took over state radio and television and announced the overthrow of President Buyoya's government and suspension of the National Assembly. The soldiers claimed to be from the *Front de la Jeunesse Patriotique*, Patriotic Youth Front. The Minister of Defence sent in troops, and Lieutenant Ntakarutimana and the other soldiers surrendered in the early hours of 19 April. President Buyoya, who was out of the country at the time, returned to Burundi that day.

PARENA, led by former president Jean-Baptiste Bagaza who was himself overthrown by Pierre Buyoya in 1987, is the only political party to have voiced what it termed "moral support" for Lieutenant Ntakarutimana, although it denied any involvement in his actions. In his statement, Lieutenant Ntakarutimana accused the government of indifference in the face of the suffering of the people, allowing them to die, and said that the National Assembly was composed of "genocidaires". Since President Buyoya's return to power in 1996, three years after he was defeated in a general election, a number of his political opponents linked to the PARENA party have been convicted on charges of threatening state security, after what appear to be politically motivated trials.

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 access to families and humanitarian and human rights organizations denied.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express/airmail letters in French or your own language (please check whether postal services to Burundi are functioning):

- urging the authorities to guarantee the safety and physical well-being of the soldiers and civilians arrested following the apparent attempted coup of 18 April;
- calling on the government to confirm and make public their whereabouts, and to allow them immediate access to their families, lawyers and appropriate medical care, as well as to humanitarian and human rights organizations;
- calling on the Commission of Inquiry to order the immediate release of any detainee against whom there no substantiating evidence or who cannot be promptly charged with a recognizably criminal offence.

APPEALS TO (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

Minister for Internal Affairs and Public Security

Colonel Ascension TWAGIRAMUNGU

Ministre de l'Intérieur et de la Sécurité Publique

Ministère de l'Intérieur

BUJUMBURA, Burundi

Telegrams: Ministre interieur, Bujumbura, Burundi

Fax: + 257 22 19 82

Salutation:Monsieur le Ministre / Dear Minister

State Public Prosecutor

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**

President of the Commission of Inquiry

Monsieur Pierre Ndayisenga

Procureur général près la Cour d'Appel

Bujumbura

Burundi

Telegrams: Procureur général cour d'appel, Bujumbura, Burundi

Fax: c/o Procureur général de la République, + 257 24 15 03

**Salutation: Monsieur le Procureur général près la Cour d'Appel / Dear 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 4 June 2001.