

EXTERNAL

AI Index: AFR 47/12/92
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Date: 15 July 1992

@ *DISAPPEARANCE*

Samuel MASABO
RWANDA

Amnesty International is concerned by the "disappearance" of Samuel Masabo, a 48-year-old health worker and pastor, following his arrest in October 1990. He was last seen in January 1991 and there has since been no news of his whereabouts. There are fears that he may have been the victim of an extrajudicial execution and Amnesty International is seeking to establish his whereabouts and fate. Samuel Masabo, who is married with six children, is a member of the minority Tutsi ethnic group and is a pastor of the Adventist church.

Background

On 1 October 1990 an armed attack on Rwanda was launched by the Uganda-based *Front patriotique rwandais* (FPR), Rwandese Patriotic Front. The FPR is composed of Rwandese exiles, mainly of Tutsi origin. After the attack, thousands of Tutsi living in Rwanda were arrested on suspicion of involvement with, or sympathies for, the FPR. There have been numerous reports since October 1990 of politically-motivated killings of Tutsi in Rwanda. The Rwandese government is dominated by members of the majority Hutu ethnic group.

On 9 October 1990, local government officials are reported to have gone to the health centre where Samuel Masabo worked and escorted him to his home where a search was conducted and a photograph album confiscated. Among the photographs was one of his daughter pictured with a school friend who was related to a businessman suspected of FPR sympathies who had fled into exile. Samuel Masabo was arrested the following day, the photograph apparently having been taken as evidence that he had links with the businessman. He was taken to Ruhengeri prison where he was held without charge.

The FPR has continued to fight a guerrilla war since their October 1990 incursion and on 23 January 1991, following another attack from Uganda, they temporarily occupied Ruhengeri town where they freed a number of prisoners. Samuel Masabo was among these prisoners, but he is reported to have been recaptured the same morning and taken to Mukingo district prison where he spent the night. The following day, on 24 January 1991, he is reported to have been taken to Mukamira military camp in Ruhengeri's Nkuli district from where he was taken on 25 January by military vehicle to an unknown destination. Nothing has been heard of him since and his family have not seen him since October 1990.

It appears that Samuel Masabo and other political prisoners freed during the January 1991 FPR attack were suspected of supporting the attack, and there are fears that Samuel Masabo may have been killed. Unconfirmed reports indicate that the number of Tutsi killed between 23

January and mid-February 1991 could be between 500 and 1,000. Following the rebel attack of October 1990, Amnesty International received numerous reports of the "disappearance" and killing of both captured FPR combatants and civilian prisoners while in the hands of the armed forces.

No response has been received to earlier appeals for information on Samuel Masabo's whereabouts, and Amnesty International is again calling on the Rwandese authorities to investigate the circumstances of his "disappearance" since he was last seen at Mukamira military camp on 25 January 1991 in the custody of the armed forces.

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To: Medical professionals
From: Medical Office / Research Department - Africa
Date: 15 July 1992

MEDICAL LETTER WRITING ACTION

**Samuel MASABO
RWANDA**

Keywords

Theme: disappearance

Summary

Samuel Masabo, a 48-year-old medical assistant at Rwankeri Adventist Mission health centre in Rwanda's Ruhengeri Prefecture, disappeared following his arrest in October 1990. There are fears that he has been the victim of an extrajudicial execution and Amnesty International is urging that the Rwandese authorities provide information about his whereabouts and fate.

Recommended Actions

Letters from medical professionals, preferably written in good French, otherwise your own language, should be sent to the addresses below:

- stating that you are concerned by the "disappearance" of Samuel Masabo following his arrest in October 1990
- urging the Rwandese authorities to provide information about his present whereabouts
- asking the authorities to investigate the circumstances of Mr Masabo's "disappearance" and to inform you of the results of such an investigation.

Addresses

Prime Minister

Monsieur Dismas Nsengiyaremye
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Présidence de la République
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République rwandaïse

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Minister of Justice

Maître Stanislas Mbonampeka
Ministre de la Justice
Ministère de la Justice
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Minister of Defence

Monsieur James Gasana
Ministre à la Présidence pour la Défense et la Sécurité
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Prefect of Ruhengeri

Monsieur Protais Zigiranyirazo
Préfet de Ruhengeri
Préfecture de Ruhengeri
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