

27 April 1998

Further information on UA 126/98 (AFR 47/11/98, 22 April 1998) - Imminent executions**RWANDA 22 people, executed on 24 April:**

Silas Munyagishali, Froduald Karamira, Virginie Mukankusi, Elie Nshimiyimana, Anastase Mvunabandi, Pian Ndahayo, Frédéric Nturoziraga, Methusalem Bakizande, Gabriel Wacaseme, William Libanje, Maximilien Habimana, Egide Gatanazi, Déogratias Bizimana, Ignace Nsengiyumva, Faustin Niyonzima, Augustin Ngendahayo, Vénuste Niyonzima, Jean Habimana, François Bizumutima, Augustin Karekezi, Abdou Nsengiyumva, François Kanyabugande

**Around 100 others sentenced to death,
including around 10 at risk of imminent execution**

On 24 April 1998, the above 22 people were executed in public in the first executions of people found guilty of participation in the genocide in Rwanda in 1994. There are indications that further executions can be expected in the very near future.

Around 10 other people sentenced to death, whose appeals have already been rejected by the Court of Appeal, are believed to be at risk of imminent execution.

Their appeals for presidential clemency are currently under consideration and a decision is expected soon. Their names have not been revealed. Similarly, the authorities did not reveal the names of the 22 people executed on 24 April until after their execution.

The cases of around 100 other people already sentenced to death are at various stages of the appeal procedure.

The public executions on 24 April took place in five different locations in Rwanda and were attended by large crowds, including many children. Four people were executed at Nyamirambo stadium in the capital Kigali; five at Nyamata; four in Kibungo; five in Gikongoro; and four in Murambi. Despite international protests, the Rwandese authorities have continued to justify these executions and have indicated that the process is likely to continue.

Many of those executed had an unfair trial, including the former assistant prosecutor Silas Munyagishali whose defence witnesses had been threatened and intimidated (see Urgent Action 126/98, 22 April 1998), and several defendants who had not even had access to a defence lawyer, such as Déogratias Bizimana and Egide Gatanazi - executed in Kibungo - , François Bizumutima - executed at Murambi -, and Augustin Ngendahayo, Faustin Niyonzima and Ignace Nsengiyumva - executed in Gikongoro (for details of these cases, see Urgent Action 02/97, 3 January 1997 and update of 13 January 1997).

Virginie Mukankusi, the first woman to be tried for participation in the genocide, was also among those executed in Kigali. During her trial in Gitarama in January 1997, none of the defence witnesses she had named were called to testify. Virginie Mukankusi did not appear to understand the procedures and contradicted herself during her defence on several occasions. Her lawyer did not have sufficient time to study her case file, yet the trial was not adjourned.

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

- strongly condemning the public execution of 22 people on 24 April 1998;
- expressing particular concern that several of those executed had had an unfair trial, mentioning some of the cases summarized above;
- expressing additional concern that the executions were carried out in public, in front of large crowds, including many children, and stating that these executions are bound to have a brutalizing effect on the spectators;
- appealing to the President to grant clemency to the other defendants whose cases are currently under consideration;
- appealing for no further executions to take place, on the basis that the death penalty represents a state-sanctioned violation of the ultimate right to life and an extreme form of cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment and expressing the belief that executions will only reinforce the cycle of violence in Rwanda;
- stressing that those who participated in the genocide should be brought to justice, but appealing for them to be given sentences which do not violate the right to life.

APPEALS TO:

President Pasteur Bizimungu

Office of the President, BP 15, Kigali, Rwanda

Telegrams: President, Kigali, Rwanda

Fax: + 250 84390

Salutation: Monsieur le Président / Dear President

Dr Faustin Ntezilyayo

Minister of Justice, Ministry of Justice, BP 160, Kigali, Rwanda

Telegrams: Minister Justice, Kigali, Rwanda

Fax: + 250 86509

Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre / Dear Minister

Major General Paul Kagame

Vice-President and Minister of Defence, Ministry of Defence

BP 23, Kigali, Rwanda

Telegrams: Vice-President, Kigali, Rwanda

Fax: + 250 72431 / 76969

Salutation: Monsieur le Vice-Président / Dear Vice-President

COPIES TO:

Pierre-Célestin Rwigema

Prime Minister, BP 1334, Kigali, Rwanda

Fax: + 250 83714

and to diplomatic representatives of Rwanda accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 8 June 1998.