

EXTERNAL

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EXTRA 76/97

Torture / Fear of torture

23 May 1997

BURUNDI

NSABIMANA Djamali, footballer
NZEYIMANA Djamali, footballer
KAMWENUBUSA Joseph, farmer from Gitega
Roger (family name unknown), civil servant
Younger brother of Roger, name and age unknown,
pupil at primary school
NYANKAWINDEMERER Arthur, civil servant
Haruna, younger brother of Arthur Nyankawindemera,
pupil at école primaire, age unknown
Léonard (family name unknown)
RAMAZANI Hamisi, works in a butcher's shop
VYANKANDONDERA Faïdi, shop keeper
HAMISI Yahya, footballer
HAMADI Haruna, civil servant
BUYOYA (first name unknown), married, two
children,
HABONIMANA Saïdo, aged 16, student

Amnesty International has just received reports that four detainees - Djamali Nsabimana, Faïdi Vyankandondera, Roger (family name not known) and his younger brother - are being tortured in incommunicado detention at Camp Buyenzi in the capital, Bujumbura. Their families have not been allowed to visit them, or to leave food for them. The reports have raised serious fears for the safety of all the detainees named above.

Djamali Nzeyimana, Joseph Kamwenubusa, Arthur Nyankawindemera and his younger brother Haruna, Léonard (family name unknown), Hamisi Ramazani, Buyoya and Saïdo Habonimana are being held at the *Brigade spéciale de recherches* (BSR), Special Investigation Brigade, in Bujumbura. Detainees are routinely ill-treated and tortured at the BSR.

Yahya Hamisi and Hamadi Haruna are both reported to be in the custody of the *Police de sécurité routière* (PSR), traffic police.

Djamali Nsabimana, Djamali Nzeyimana, Joseph Kamwenubusa, Roger and his brother, Arthur Nyankawindemera and his brother, Léonard, Hamisi Ramazani, and Faïdi Vyankandondera were arrested on 8 April. Yahya Hamisi was arrested on 9 April, Haruna Hamnadi on 10 April and Buyoya and Saïdo Habonimana on 26 April 1997. All of them, apart from Faïdi Vyankandondera who was arrested in Nyakabiga district of Bujumbura, were arrested in Buyenzi district. They are believed to have been detained on suspicion of involvement in a series of mine explosions in Bujumbura. They are not thought to have been officially charged, although their cases have now gone to the Public Prosecutor's Office.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Although Major Pierre Buyoya promised to end human rights violations when he came to power after a coup d'état in July 1996, Amnesty International has documented thousands of cases of extrajudicial execution, "disappearance", arbitrary arrest and torture since that date. Critics and opponents of the government have also been harassed, arrested and tortured

in a pattern of attacks on political opponents, aiming to eliminate effective political opposition. More than 100, and possibly as many as 150 arrests have taken place over the course of the last few weeks in Bujumbura. Those arrested are predominantly young men, mostly members of the Hutu ethnic group. None are known to have been charged and at least two men have died as a result of torture and ill-treatment.

More than 6,500 civilians, mostly Hutu, including at least 2,600 accused of involvement in massacres in Burundi, are held in various prisons and detention centres around the country. The majority are held without charge or trial. Torture by members of the security forces is reported to be carried out systematically, and with impunity. Deaths in custody are often reported.

Amnesty International has repeatedly called on the Burundi authorities to investigate human rights violations, including extrajudicial execution, "disappearance", torture and ill-treatment and arbitrary arrest, committed by members of the Burundi security forces who continue to act with complete impunity.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/faxes (currently no post to Burundi) in French or your own language:

- expressing concern for the safety of all the detainees named above, particularly those held incommunicado at Camp Buyenzi following reports that they are being tortured;
- urging that these reports be immediately investigated and, if confirmed, that those responsible be brought to justice in accordance with international standards for fair trial;
- urging that immediate steps be taken to guarantee the safety and humane treatment in custody of all the detainees named above;
- seeking clarification of the reasons for their arrest and continued detention and calling for them to be released if they are not to be promptly charged with recognizably criminal offences, in accordance with proper legal procedures;
- calling on the authorities to allow the detainees immediate access to their families, legal counsel, medical care and representatives of humanitarian organisations.

APPEALS TO:

Minister for Internal Affairs and Public Security

Lt-Col. Epitace BAYAGANAKANDI

Ministre de l'Intérieur et de la Sécurité Publique

Ministère de l'Intérieur

Telegram : Ministre Interieur, Bujumbura, Burundi

Fax: 257 22 21 48 / 257 21 30 55

Salutation : Monsieur le Ministre

Minister of Justice

Monsieur Terence SINUNGURUZA

Ministre de la Justice et Garde des sceaux

Ministère de la Justice

Fax: 257 22 21 48

Telegram: Ministre Justice, Bujumbura, Burundi

Salutation : Monsieur le Ministre

Minister of Defence

Lieutenant-Col. Firmin SINZOYIHEBA

Ministre de la Défense Nationale

Ministère de la Défense

Fax: 257 22 39 59

Telegrams: Ministre Defense, Bujumbura, Burundi

Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre

Procureur général

Procureur général

Fax: 257 222148

Telegrams: Procureur General, Bujumbura, Burundi

Salutation: Monsieur le procureur général

COPIES TO:President

Major Pierre Buyoya

Président de la République

Présidence de la République

Fax: 257 22 7490

Gendarmerie Chief of Staff

Colonel George MUKORAKO

Chef de l'Etat-major général de la gendarmerie

Etat-major général de la gendarmerie

Ministère de la Défense nationale

Fax: 257 22 39 59

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 25 June 1997.