

EXTRA 77/97 Fear of torture and ill-treatment / Deaths in custody 29 May 1997

BURUNDI Detainees at Socarti military camp, Kamenge, Bujumbura including:

PAZIRUPWABO Jérôme  
Pascal "Le Vieux"  
NIMBONA Georges  
NDIKUMANA Bosco  
Alexis  
Omar  
NDAYISHINIYE Samuel  
GIHONGA  
Alexis "Papi"  
BERAHINO  
NGENDABADASHAKA Elie  
Eric

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Reports that three men have died as a result of torture in recent weeks in Socarti military camp in the Kamenge district of the capital, Bujumbura, have raised serious fears for the safety of other detainees held there, including those named above.

Muyaga (first name not known) is reported to have died in Socarti in mid-May 1997, some three weeks after his arrest. Another man, whose name is not known to Amnesty International but who is believed to have been the younger brother of Savimbi, a prominent member of the Hutu-dominated armed group, the *Forces pour la Défense de la Démocratie* (FDD), Forces for the Defence of Democracy, is also reported to have died in mid-May some four weeks after his arrest. A third man, Ernest Kabwe, who was arrested on 5 May and taken to Socarti, is reported to have died after torture on 9 May.

Torture and ill-treatment are routine in Burundi. Detainees are especially vulnerable to such abuses in cases such as these when legal procedures are not followed and safeguards protecting detainees, such as making the place of detention known and giving full access to detainees, are not implemented or adhered to. The fact that Socarti military camp is being used as an unofficial detention centre heightens concern for those held there.

The majority of the detainees named above are reported to have been arrested in the Kinama district of Bujumbura by the *3e Bataillon d'Intervention*, Third Intervention Battalion of the Gendarmerie. Most were arrested in May although Berahino and Elie Ngendabadashaka were arrested in February or March 1997. None have been officially charged although they are reported to have been arrested on suspicion of links with armed groups. Amnesty International is concerned that some of the arrests may have been arbitrary and it is not clear if any steps have been taken to establish whether there is a legal basis for the arrests.

Amnesty International has received reports that up to 150 people, mostly young male Hutu, have been arrested in a number of raids in Bujumbura, all on suspicion of links with armed groups. Fighting is currently taking place between armed groups and government forces in the province of Rural Bujumbura close to the capital.

**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 three 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.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/faxes (currently no mail) in French or your own language:**

- calling for immediate steps to guarantee the safety and humane treatment of all the detainees at Socarti military camp, in view of the reported death following torture of at least three detainees;
- urging that the reported deaths be immediately investigated and, if confirmed, that those responsible be brought to justice in accordance with international standards for fair trial;
- calling on the authorities to allow the detainees held in the camp immediate access to their families, legal counsel, medical care and representatives of humanitarian organizations;
- seeking clarification of the reasons for their arrest and continued detention, calling for them to be released if they are not to be promptly charged with recognizably criminal offences;
- calling for the transfer of any detainees against whom there are legal grounds for continued detention to a civilian prison under the supervision of the Procuracy (*parquet*).

**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 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**

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****Telegrams: Etat-major general gendarmerie, Bujumbura, Burundi****Salutation: Monsieur le Colonel**Procureur général

M. Jean Bosco BUTASI

Procureur général

**Fax: 257 222148****Telegrams: Procureur General, Bujumbura, Burundi****Salutation: Monsieur le Procureur général****COPIES TO:**Minister of Justice

Monsieur Terence SINUNGURUZA

Ministre de la Justice et Garde des sceaux

Ministère de la Justice

**Fax: 257 22 21 48**President

Major Pierre Buyoya

Président de la République

Présidence de la République

**Fax: 257 22 7490**

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 3 July 1997.