

PUBLIC

AI Index: AFR 47/21/99

UA 315/99

"Disappearance"

7 December 1999

RWANDA

Edouard Mpabuka, peasant, aged 28

There are fears for the safety of Edouard Mpabuka, who was taken from a detention centre by soldiers on 8 November 1999 and whose whereabouts are now unknown.

Edouard Mpabuka was detained in the *cachot communal* (commune detention centre) of Giciye, in the northwestern *préfecture* of Gisenyi. On the evening of 8 November, soldiers reportedly took him away from the *cachot* in a white truck. There are unconfirmed reports that he was killed at Gitebe, less than one kilometre away.

The local authorities have reportedly confirmed that he is no longer detained at the *cachot* in Giciye but have not revealed his whereabouts.

He had previously been released from the *brigade* (gendarmerie detention centre) at Kabaya, in Gisenyi, on 15 October, but was re-arrested soon afterwards and detained in Giciye *cachot*.

Edouard Mpabuka comes from Gihira *cellule*, Gihira *secteur*, Giciye *commune*, in Gisenyi.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Since 1997 hundreds of people have "disappeared" in Rwanda, many in the northwestern *préfectures* of Gisenyi and Ruhengeri. The largest number of "disappearances" occurred in 1997 and 1998, during a period of armed conflict between the Rwandese security forces and armed opposition groups believed to include members of the former Rwandese army who took part in the genocide in 1994.

"Disappearances" have continued in 1999, albeit on a lesser scale. Most people who "disappear" are presumed dead, and their families rarely find the bodies. However, some of those who "disappear" are thought to be held in unofficial or inaccessible detention centres, such as military camps. The practice of detaining civilians in military camps has continued throughout 1999, especially in the northwest of Rwanda. A number of people have "disappeared" after being transferred from one detention centre to another.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Edouard Mpabuka, who was reportedly taken by soldiers from the *cachot communal* of Giciye to an unknown destination on 8 November 1999;
- appealing to the authorities to establish his whereabouts and whether he is alive as a matter of urgency, and to inform his family;
- asking for assurances that his safety be guaranteed, if he is alive;
- asking for an immediate investigation into his "disappearance" and possible death, and calling for those found responsible to be brought to justice.

APPEALS TO:

Sheikh Abdul Karim HARELIMANA
Ministre de la Sécurité intérieure
Ministère de la Sécurité intérieure
BP 446, Kigali, Rwanda
Telegrams: Minister Interior, Kigali, Rwanda
Fax: + 250 82071
Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre / Dear Minister

Capitaine Jean-Baptiste MUHIRWA
Préfet de Gisenyi
Préfecture de Gisenyi
BP 173, Gisenyi, Rwanda
Fax: + 250 61312
Salutation: Monsieur le Préfet / Dear Sir

Jean de Dieu MUCYO
Ministre de la Justice
Ministère de la Justice
BP 160, Kigali, Rwanda
Telegrams: Minister Justice, Kigali, Rwanda
Fax: + 250 86509
Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre / Dear Minister

General Major Paul KAGAME
Vice-Président et Ministre de la Défense
Ministère de la Défense
BP 23, Kigali, Rwanda
Telegrams: Vice-President, Kigali, Rwanda
Fax: + 250 72431 / 76969
Salutation: Monsieur le Vice-Président / Dear Vice-President

COPIES 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 18 January 2000.