

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Further information on UA 316/90 (AFR 47/05/90, 27 July) - Legal Concern

**RWANDA; Vincent RWABUKWISI, Editor of KANGUKA bimonthly newspaper
Hassan NGEZE. Editor of KANGURA bimonthly newspaper**

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On 22 October 1990 Vincent Rwabukwisi and Hassan Ngeze appeared before the State Security Court in the capital, Kigali, and were convicted on charges of having written and distributed seditious documents. They both received a one-year prison sentence suspended for two years. Hassan Ngeze was released after the trial. Please send no further appeals on his behalf.

Vincent Rwabukwisi was also convicted on a separate charge of endangering the security of the state by contacting people intending to undermine Rwanda's security

The charge arose from his meeting in July 1990 in Kenya with the former King (mwani) of Rwanda, Kigeri Ndahindurwa. He was sentenced to 15 years' imprisonment.

Amnesty International is concerned that this conviction and long sentence may have been imposed on account of political developments which occurred after his arrest and after his trial began: an attack on northeast Rwanda by Ugandan-based Rwandese exiles. Amnesty International is seeking details about the State Security Court's judgment in order to determine the fairness of the trial and conviction. The organization requested permission to observe the trial but received no response from the Rwandan authorities.

Vincent Rwabukwisi was arrested on his return from the Kenyan capital, Nairobi, where he reportedly met Rwandese refugees who are members of the Tutsi ethnic group, including the former King of Rwanda who was overthrown shortly before Rwanda's independence in 1960. Before Vincent Rwabukwisi's trip to Nairobi, an issue of Kanguka newspaper had been banned by the authorities apparently because it referred to a letter written by the former King about the desire of Tutsi refugees to return to Rwanda. The government has in the past rejected demands by the refugees to return to Rwanda saying that the country is too small and poor to accommodate them. Amnesty International is concerned that Vincent Rwabukwisi may be a prisoner of conscience, convicted on account of his contacts with Rwandese exiles without any evidence being presented in court that he was aware of the impending attack on northeast Rwanda or that his discussions in Kenya involved any advocacy of the use of violence.

The two defendants had initially appeared in court in mid-July 1990 when the Public Prosecutor pressed for sentences of 20 years' imprisonment for Vincent Rwabukwisi and 10 years' imprisonment for Hassan Ngeze. Twice the court refused to pass judgment on the grounds that insufficient evidence had been presented by the prosecution on which to convict them. However, three weeks after the attack on northeast Rwanda, the court reconvened and announced its verdict, apparently without hearing further evidence.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Telexes/telegrams/airmail letters in French if possible:

- welcoming the release from prison of Hassan Ngeze;

- expressing concern that Vincent Rwabikwisi is still imprisoned, serving a 15-year sentence imposed by the State Security Court on 22 October 1990 after being convicted on account of his contacts with the former mwami and other Rwandese exiles in Kenya;

- expressing concern that Vincent Rwabikwisi was convicted shortly after the attack on northeast Rwanda by Uganda-based exiles, when the same court had on two previous occasions failed to reach a verdict on his case on the grounds that there was insufficient prosecution evidence to convict him;

- inquiring what new evidence, if any, was available to justify his conviction and whether the court heard any evidence at all that Vincent Rwabikwisi had prior knowledge of the attack on northeast Rwanda or was in any way involved in advocating the use of violence;

- expressing concern that if he is imprisoned simply for having met the former mwami and other Rwandese exiles to discuss the issue of the possible return to Rwanda and Rwandese exiles, he would be a prisoner of conscience, and as such should be released immediately and unconditionally.

APPEALS TO:

Son Excellence

Président HABYARIMANA Juvénal

Président de la République

BP 15

Kigali, République Rwandaise

Telegrams: President Habyarimana, Kigali, Rwanda

Telexes: 517

Monsieur le Secrétaire Général du service central de renseignements

BP 125

Kigali, République Rwandaise

Telegrams: Secrétaire General du SCR, Kigali, Rwanda

Telexes: 517

Monsieur MUGEMANA Jean-Marie Vianney

Ministre de l'Intérieur et du développement communautaire

Ministère de l'Intérieur

BP 446,

Kigali, République Rwandaise

Telegrams: Ministre Nugema, Kigali, Rwanda

Telexes: 502

Monsieur MUJYANAMA Théoneste

Ministre de la Justice

Ministère de la Justice

BP 160

Kigali, République Rwandaise

Telegrams: Ministre Mujyanama, Kigali, Rwanda

Telexes: 502

COPIES TO:

Monsieur le Rédacteur-en-Chef

Imvaho

BP 83

Kigali, République Rwandaise

Monsieur le Rédacteur-en-Chef

Kinyamateka

BP 761

Kigali, République Rwandaise

Monsieur le Rédacteur-en-Chef

Relève

Office rwandais d'information

BP 83
Kigali, République Rwandaise

and to diplomatic representatives of Rwanda in your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat or your section office, if sending appeals after 19 December 1990.