

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Torture/legal concern

7 July 1992

RWANDA:

Shabani Gasigwa, 53 years old, driver

Ali Hitimana, 22 years old

Kayiranga, 26 years old, trader

Hadj Haruna Maboyi

Louis Nkusi, 30 years old

Evariste Sissi, 49 years old, businessman

Bosco Uwizeyimana, 27 years old

Vianney, son of Mbundi, 33 years old

The eight members of the Tutsi minority ethnic group named above were arrested during June 1992 and accused of involvement in recruiting fighters for an armed opposition force, the Front patriotique rwandais (FPR), Rwandese Patriotic Front. Virtually all of them were initially held for several days at an interrogation centre supervised by the National Gendarmerie in the centre of Kigali known as the "Fichier central" (Central Registry), also known as the "Service de criminologie", (Criminology Service), where they were severely subjected to torture or severe ill-treatment. They have since been transferred to Kigali central prison. Evariste Sissi was previously detained uncharged following the first FPR attacks on Rwanda, from October 1990 to early 1991 (see UA 02/91, AFR 47/01/91, dated 7 January 1991). For several weeks in late 1992 and January 1992 he was held in a dark dungeon known as "*cachot noir*".

Hadj Haruna Maboyi was arrested at an unspecified place in early June 1992. Shabani Gasigwa, who was arrested with five of the others named above on 26 June 1992 at Semakamba in Kibungo Prefecture, is reported to have written a letter on 5 July 1992 to the Minister of Justice, saying that he had been severely beaten and forced to make a false statement that he had transported FPR recruits paid by Evariste Sissi. He also said that Ali Hitimana had been beaten so severely that he had to be transferred to hospital intensive care. Evariste Sissi was arrested on 29 June 1992, apparently on the basis of declarations made by Shabani Gasigwa

Evariste Sissi appeared before a magistrate on 2 July to consider his application for provisional release. The magistrate rejected his application and remanded him in custody. It is unclear what offence he has been charged with. The other detainees are not known to have appeared before a judicial authority or charged with any offence.

Suspects held at the "Fichier central" interrogation centre in Kigali are known to have been tortured there on numerous occasions. Amnesty International is concerned that members of the security services may again interrogate some or all these eight detainees, in which case they are in danger of torture and other forms of cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

More than 8,000 people, most of them Tutsi like the eight mentioned above, were detained between October 1990 and mid-1991 in connection with the FPR guerilla war launched in October 1990 from neighbouring Uganda. Those arrested were suspected, mostly without evidence,

of supporting the FPR. Many detainees were subjected to torture and other forms of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment at the time of their arrest and in custody. Most FPR fighters are Tutsi, while members of the government and the security forces come mainly from the majority Hutu ethnic group. The FPR, who have since occupied parts of northern Rwanda, claim that they are fighting to force the government to allow the return of Tutsi refugees and participation of Tutsi in running the country's affairs.

Most of those arrested were released by mid-1991 and others in February 1992. However, several dozen people who the authorities say are rebels captured in action remain in custody without trial.

In April 1992 a government of national unity composed of Rwanda's five main political parties was formed by a Prime Minister from an opposition party. There have been hopes that the new government would ensure respect for human rights including an end to arbitrary and unlawful detentions and torture.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express and airmail letters:

- expressing concern at reports that some of the eight people arrested for political reasons in June 1992 (naming some, especially Shabani Gasigwa and Ali Hitimana) were subjected to severe beatings, apparently while in gendarmerie custody, in order to force them to make statements in which they incriminated both themselves and others;
- asking for assurances that the detainees are no longer being ill-treated or held in dark dungeons (*cachots noirs*), and that they are being allowed to receive adequate medical care;
- expressing concern that, as in 1990 and 1991, members of the "Fichier central", Central Registry, are again reported to have been responsible for torture and other forms of ill-treatment in June 1992 and that the authorities do not seem to have taken any action to prevent such violations of human rights being committed at the Central Registry;
- urging the authorities to order an independent and impartial investigation into these torture reports in order to bring those responsible for torture to justice, and to recommend ways of preventing torture;
- urging in particular that an investigation be carried out to establish if Evariste Sissi and others are detained on the basis of statements made under torture by Shabani Gasigwa;
- urging the authorities to release any detainees being held solely on suspicion based only on their Tutsi ethnic origin or uncorroborated statements made under torture without delay. Urging too that if recognizably criminal charges have been or are to be brought against them they are referred to the Procuracy with a view to bringing them promptly to trial.

APPEALS TO

1) Prime Minister:

Monsieur NSENGIYAREMYE Dismas
Premier Ministre
Présidence de la République
BP 15, Kigali, République rwandaise
Telegrams: Premier Ministre, Kigali, Rwanda
Telexes: 22502
Faxes: + 250 74583

Monsieur le Premier Ministre /
Dear Prime Minister

2) Minister of Justice:

Maître MBONAMPEKA Stanislas
Ministre de la Justice
Ministère de la Justice
BP 160, Kigali, République rwandaise
Telegrams: Ministre Justice, Kigali, Rwanda
Telexes: 22517

Monsieur le Ministre /
Dear Minister

Faxes: + 250 72902 or + 250 72904

3) Minister of Foreign Affairs:

Monsieur NGULINZIRA Boniface

Ministre des Affaires étrangères Cooperation

Ministre et de la Coopération

Ministère des Affaires étrangères

BP 179, Kigali, République rwandaise

Telegrams: Ministre Affaires étrangères, Kigali, Rwanda

Faxes: + 250 72902 or + 250 72904

Monsieur le Ministre /

Dear Minister

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

1) Security Police Director:

Monsieur HAKIZIMANA Donat

Secrétaire général du Service

central de renseignements (SCR)

BP 125, Kigali

République rwandaise

2) National Gendarmerie Chief of Staff:

Monsieur le Lieutenant-Colonel

NDINDILYIMANA Augustin

Chef d'Etat-major de la

Gendarmerie Nationale

Ministère de la Défense nationale

BP 85, Kigali, République rwandaise

and to diplomatic representatives of Rwanda in your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Please check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 18 August 1992.