NATIONAL CATHOLIC REPORTER
Published on *National Catholic Reporter* (http://ncronline.org)

Priest's homily leads to deportation from Zambia

Mwansa Pintu Catholic News Service | Aug. 3, 2012

LUSAKA, Zambia -- Zambian authorities deported a Rwandese Catholic priest after he was detained for two days and questioned for preaching about poverty and justice for the poor during a Mass.

Edgar Lungu, minister of home affairs, confirmed that Father Viateur Banyangandora, pastor of the parish in Lundazi, Zambia, was sent to his homeland Aug. 1. He declined to say why the priest, 40, was deported.

"Father Banyangandora's conduct was found to be a danger to peace and good order in Zambia," Lungu said.

Zambian church officials had no immediate comment on the deportation.

Father Banyangandora was picked up at his residence by police at about 5 p.m., July 30, and taken to Lusaka, the Zambian capital, for questioning, said Father Evan Sakala, the parish's parochial vicar.

Father Sakala explained that police pointed to comments that Father Banyangandora made in which he castigated the government over its handling of an impasse between cotton growers and cotton ginners. Authorities, Father Sakala said, apparently considered the comments capable of inciting people to rise against the government.

The Zambian government and the Cotton Association of Zambia have been unable to reach an agreement on the price of cotton being paid to growers. The stalemate has led the association to halt the sale of cotton to the Cotton Ginners Association of Zambia, which offered a price more than 50 percent lower than its 2011 offer. The impasse has led some farmers to burn cotton stockpiles in protest.

"We were told that he was being taken to Lusaka for further questioning, but his mobile (phone) is switched off," Father Sakala said.

Eastern Province police commissioner Grace Chipalila neither confirmed nor denied the arrest of the clergyman in Lundazi, a city of about 12,000 residents, 450 miles east of the capital.

However, Bishop George Lungu of Chipata confirmed that a team of security personnel picked up the priest from his residence July 30.

"I spoke to him shortly before they took him, but up to now we have not heard from him or know his whereabouts," Bishop Lungu said Aug. 1.

Father Banyangandora, a native of Rwanda, came to Zambia for seminary formation was ordained in the Chipata Diocese in 2004.

Source URL (retrieved on *12/13/2013 - 15:35*): http://ncronline.org/news/global/priests-homily-leads-deportation-zambia