

REPORT NO 178 OF SOS-TORTURE/BURUNDI PUBLISHED ON MAY 11, 2019

This SOS-Torture/Burundi report covers the period from May 4 to 11, 2019 concerning cases of human rights violations and abuses in Burundi.

At least three (3) persons were murdered during the period. The victims have not been identified. At least four (4) persons were victims of torture in different locations. Members of imbonerakure militiamen are blamed for these acts of torture and cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment.

The report also mentions thirteen (13) arbitrary arrests, the majority of which were members of the political opposition, a journalist and a mother

1. Violations of the right to life and physical integrity

- Unidentified individuals murdered two (2) men whose bodies were discovered on Gabiro-Ruvyagira and Munyika I hills, Rugombo commune, Cibitoke province (northwest of the country) on May 4, 2019.

Sos-Torture/Burundi notes that the victims have not been identified.

- Unidentified individuals murdered a man whose body was found in a field on crossroad III, Rukana Hill, Rugombo commune, Cibitoke province (northwest of the country) on May 7, 2019. Witnesses report that he was hit several times with machetes.

Sos-Torture/Burundi notes that Rugombo police have not yet identified any suspects to date. The victim has also not been identified. Local residents suspect that members of imbonerakure militia are the perpetrators of this murder because they are the only ones conducting night patrols

2. Violations of the right to liberty and physical security

- Kirundo Police Commissioner arrested Oscar Nizigiyimana, Anatole Karorero, Mathias Ndayisaba, Eugène Rukerandanga, Innocent Nkezabahizi, Jonas Nzeyimana and Vincent Nzitunga in the centre of Kirundo commune and province (north of the country) on May 3, 2019 in the evening. The persons arrested are all activists of the opposition party CNL (National Congress for Freedom), including the leader of this party in Kirundo province, Mr. Nizigiyimana. Witnesses report that the arrest took place in a bar where they were sharing a drink.

Sos-Torture/Burundi notes an arbitrary arrest of these opposition members. During their arrest, witnesses reported that members of the imbonerakure militia of the ruling CNDD-FDD party accompanied Kirundo police commissioner. Since the party's approval, many cases of arbitrary arrests and torture of CNL activists have been reported.

- Police agents arrested Claude Nshimirimana in Kabezi, Bujumbura province on May 5, 2019. Relatives report that he is a journalist with RTNB (Burundi National TV). Mr. Nshimirimana was arrested while doing sports with other people and accused of holding an illegal meeting.

Sos-Torture/Burundi notes an arbitrary arrest and detention without evidence of the charges brought against Mr. Nshimirimana. Relatives report that he was interrogated by a criminal police officer who told him that Kabezi police were ordered to arrest him. The journalist was finally released on 8 May 2019 without any form of trial.



Claude Nshimirimana detained for 4 days after an arrest during the sport

- Police agents arrested Ms. Eugénie Habonimana on Gitaramuka Hill, Murago area, Burambi commune, Rumonge province (southwestern part of the country) on May 9, 2019. Witnesses report that she was questioned when she returned from work in her fields.

Sos-Torture/Burundi notes that the police did not inform the person concerned about the reasons for the arrest. This is not the first time that Ms. Habonimana has been victim of arbitrary arrests. She was detained in August 2016 when police agents and members of the imbonerakure militiamen surrounded her home in search of her husband. The latter, named Protais, is accused by militiamen of having joined a rebel group (see **Sos-Torture Burundi report N°37**: <http://sostortureburundi.over-blog.com/2016/08/sos-torture-burundi-n-37-english-erson.html>). After his release, Eugénie Habonimana chose to flee his home and settle in the commune of Mugamba, Bururi province with her children following constant threats and intimidation by imbonerakure militiamen.

- Members of imbonerakure militiamen tortured Salomon Bizindavyi on Nyentakara hill, Bigina zone, Kayogoro commune, Makamba province (southern part of the country) on May 3, 2019. Witnesses report that the victim was in a bar and had a fight with the owner of the bistro. The latter called on members of imbonerakure militiamen who in turn tortured Mr. Bizindavyi.

Sos-Torture/Burundi notes the violence of the torture that left the victim with physical abuse: Mr. Bizindavyi has difficulty standing up because his body and genitals were tied up during the torture and cruel and inhuman treatment session. Police did not arrest any suspects although the victim identified some of his attackers, including Nathan Bimenyimana (Representative of imbonerakure militiamen in Bigina) and Athanase Nteturuye (head of the Nyentakara hill).



Photos showing the traces of torture suffered by Mr. Salomon Bizindavyi

- Members of the imbonerakure militiamen tortured Daniel Sinkimutuma and his son in Gasorwe commune, Muyinga province (north of the country) on May 5, 2019. Witnesses report that Mr. Sinkimutuma and his son were assaulted in a bar not far from their home at the same time.

Sos-Torture/Burundi notes violence of beatings received by the victims, for no apparent reason. The police have not apprehended any suspects to date, although the victims have filed a complaint and identified one of their attackers, namely Salathiel.

- Members of imbonerakure militiamen tortured Jean Nsabimana on the Nyentakara hill, Bigina area, Kayogoro commune, Makamba province on May 7, 2019. Witnesses report that the victim is a guard. He was tied up and tortured by militiamen of the ruling party who accused him of theft.

Sos-Torture/Burundi notes violence of the torture suffered by the victim. The same militiamen detained Mr. Nsabimana in a construction site. The police did not arrest any suspects although the victim filed a complaint against his torturers, Nathan Bimenyimana (Representative of the imbonerakure militia in Bigina) and Athanase Nteturuye (Nyentakara hill chief) who had already tortured another man a few days earlier.

- Police agents arrested Révérien Kwizerimana in the centre of Muyinga commune and province (north of the country) on May 8, 2019. He is the Representative of the opposition party FRODEBU (Front for Democracy in Burundi) in Butihinda commune. Relatives report that he is accused of undermining the internal security of the State, following his alleged involvement in a fight involving members of the imbonerakure militiamen of the ruling party CNDD-FDD.

Sos-Torture/Burundi notes an arbitrary arrest linked to the victim's political affiliation. None of the members of the imbonerakure militia who allegedly participated in the fight were arrested. Moreover, a fight between political party activists cannot be qualified as a breach of State security.

- Police agents arrested Emmanuel Bimenyimana, Eric Ndikumana and Benoît in Ruziba quarter, Kanyosha zone, Muha commune (south of the city of Bujumbura) on May 8, 2019. These are members of CNL opposition party: Mr. Bimenyimana is the president of the CNL youth in Kanyosha zone, Mr. Ndikumana is a member of the executive committee of the CNL youth body and Benoît is the youth representative in Nyabugete Quarter. Witnesses report that during the arrest, members of the imbonerakure militiamen accompanied police agents.

Sos-Torture/Burundi notes arbitrary arrests linked to political affiliation of the three (3) men. They are accused of holding a clandestine meeting and were beaten up before being picked up by the police.



The three local CNL party officials arrested by police in Kanyosha



SOS – Torture/Burundi

Monitoring sur les cas de torture, les arrestations arbitraires, les disparitions forcées et les exécutions sommaires au Burundi

SOS-Torture/Burundi was initiated with the aim of informing national and international opinion about serious human rights violations under way in Burundi through monitoring reports on torture, arbitrary arrests, enforced disappearances, sexual violence and summary executions.

This initiative to inform about the country's realities followed the carnage of around 100 people killed on 11 and 12 December 2015 by policemen and soldiers under the pretext of pursuing rebels who had just attacked military camps on the outskirts of the capital.

The affected zones are said to be contesting President Nkurunziza's third term of office, namely Musaga, Mutakura, Cibitoke, Nyakabiga, Jabe, the last two being located in the centre of the Bujumbura City Hall.

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