

SOS-TORTURE / BURUNDI REPORT N ° 122 ISSUED ON 14 APRIL 2018

This report of SOS-Torture covers the period between 7 and 14 April 2018 concerning cases of human rights violations in Burundi.

Almost four (4) persons were murdered during the period among them a man beaten to death by members of the imbonerakure militiamen in a police cell in Cibitoke province. None of the torturers have been apprehended so far. A soldier also committed suicide after raping a minor girl in Bubanza.

The report also mentions the case of the disappearance of a young executive of a company in Bujumbura, after false messages of a car accident concerning him were diffused on the social networks.

Nearly thirty-six (36) persons were arrested, including some thirty faithful of Euzébie Ngendakumana (a priestess sought by the police for several years) in Bubanza. Among those arrested are also two (2) FNL opposition party activists arrested by local administrative officials in Rumonge and Makamba and two young returnees arrested by young imbonerakure in Kayogoro, Makamba province.

1. Violations of the right to life and to physical integrity

- Individuals murdered a man and seriously injured another on Rwandagaro Hill, Bugenyuzi Commune, Karusi Province (Central-East) on April 7, 2018 in the evening. Witnesses report that the injured victim is Damien Niyontuka (70 years old) and was previously threatened, along with a dozen other people on a "list of people to be neutralized".

Sos-Torture Burundi notes the arrest of two (2) persons in the course of their investigation.

- Youth of the imbonerakure militiamen beaten to death Thaddée Nzokizwanimana who died as a result of torture in the police cell of Rugombo commune, Cibitoke province, north-west of the country, on 9 April 2018. Relatives report that the victim (aged 60) was accused by the militiamen of causing some deaths as a result of "witchcraft".

Sos-Torture Burundi notes an execution with clubs, and the inaction of the police to prevent the commission of the crime. The police also did not arrest any of the alleged perpetrators, despite the testimonies of relatives of the victim; which confirms the complicity of police agents with members of the militiamen.

- A girl was sexually assaulted on Kizina Hill, Bubanza commune and province on April 8, 2018 in the evening. The victim is a minor aged 15, and relatives report that she was able to identify the perpetrator: a soldier named Innocent Nirera assigned to the 411th Battalion based in Randa, Bubanza commune.

Sos-Torture Burundi notes that the alleged perpetrator tried to bribe the employers of the victim with a check of 500,000 francs. Police arrested three persons accused of obstructing justice for accepting the check: Jean Ndayizeye, his wife Marie Chantal Nishimwe and Salathiel. Sos-Torture Burundi also learned the suicide of the alleged perpetrator of rape with his service weapon.

- Unidentified individuals murdered 70-year-old Margueritte Habonimpa, whose body was discovered in a village V field, Gihanga commune, Bubanza province (western part of the country) on April 10, 2018 in the evening. Relatives report that the victim was beaten and strangled.

Sos-Torture Burundi notes that the police have not identified any suspects to date, nor determined the motive behind this assassination.

- Unidentified individuals murdered Ndayishimiye (aged 50), whose body was found on Murambi Hill, Kibago commune, Makamba province (south of the country) on April 13, 2018. Relatives report that the victim was not seen since yesterday, and have alerted the police to report his disappearance.

Sos-Torture Burundi notes that the police have not identified any suspects to date.

2. Violations of the right to liberty and physical security

- Police agents keep Livin Nzoyihaya and Charles Twaragiwe in prolonged detention in the prison of Rugombo commune, Cibitoke province (north-west of the country). These two men were arrested a little bit over a month ago by the police chief of Rugombo commune, OPP1 officer Jean Baptiste Habumuremyi, and accused of making several shuttles between Cibitoke province and Rwanda.

Sos-Torture Burundi notes an arbitrary detention which also violates the conditions of detention and legal custody periods. Police agents also report that the names of MM. Nzoyihaya and Twaragiwe do not appear anywhere in the inmate's prison registry. The two men trade between Cibitoke province and Rwanda. Sos-Torture Burundi also notes that they are victims of tense relations between Burundi and Rwanda, the Burundian government accusing its neighbor of trying to destabilize Burundi.

- National Intelligence Service agents arrested Gilbert Nyawakira and Chrysostome Ndamaniha in Carama neighborhood, Kinama zone, Ntahangwa commune (north of Bujumbura town) on April 9, 2018 in the evening. It is the leader of the Confederation of Trade Unions of Burundi (CSB) and a teacher of the Institute of Applied Pedagogy of the University of Burundi. Relatives report that the two men were arrested at their table tennis club, where they go regularly.

Sos-Torture Burundi also learned of the arrest of nineteen (19) others at the same location, including civilians, two police officers and an army officer. All of these people are part of the same table tennis club. Sos-Torture Burundi notes that they were all released after 24 hours of detention at the SNR.

- Police agents arrested about 30 persons in the center of Musigati commune, Bubanza province (western part of the country) on April 11, 2018. Witnesses report that all these persons are followers of Euzébie Ngendakumana, a young woman leader religious teachings sought by Burundian police. Many of these followers had fled Burundi a few years ago, before their return a few weeks ago.

Sos-Torture Burundi notes that the police suspect that these believers are preparing to meet at their former place of worship in Businde, Kayanza province (north-west of the country), barred by police. No evidence of these allegations was provided by the police, which gives rise to fears of further persecution of these individuals.

- Young imbonerakure militiamen arrested J. Marie Barekebavuge (35) and David Nkuzimana (20) on Gatabo hill and zone, Kayogoro commune, Makamba province

(South of the country) on April 11, 2018. Witnesses report that they were coming back just from Nyarugusu refugee camp. They spent two days in Gatabo zone before being transferred to the detention center of the Kayogoro communal police station.

- An administrative official arrested Ferdinand Kagi in Gatabo zone, Kayogoro commune, Makamba province (south of the country) on April 12, 2018. Witnesses report that it was done by Kayogoro communal administrator, Zachée Misago responding to the order of provincial governor Gad Niyukuri. Relatives report that Mr. Kagi is an activist of the FNL opposition party faithful to Agathon Rwasa.

Sos-Torture Burundi notes that Mr. Kagi is being held in police custody, which gives rise to fears of a politically motivated arrest. The police must release this man otherwise it will be an accomplice in the violation of the rights and freedoms of victims targeted by members of the administration.

- Unidentified individuals kidnapped Rodrigue Nzeyimana, reported as untraceable by his relatives since April 12, 2018 in the city of Bujumbura. Witnesses report that Mr. Nzeyimana's vehicle was found in a gutter between two lanes of the Boulevard of 28 November, Mutanga-Sud quarter, Rohero zone, Mukaza commune.

Sos-Torture Burundi also learned that false messages on social networks were broadcasted on the day of his disappearance, announcing that Mr. Nzeyimana had been a victim of a car accident and taken to a hospital. A second wave of messages announcing his "release" flooded social networks in the same evening. Relatives of the victim have denied all these messages, and confirm an abduction.

Sos-Torture Burundi notes a forced disappearance, with a risk too high for the safety of Mr. Nzeyimana especially that the police remain silent on this case. The victim is a manager at the cement company "Burundi Cement Company" (Buceco).



Rodrigue Nzeyimana, missing since April 12 in Bujumbura

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Mr.Nzeyimana's vehicle found in a gutter

- Another administrative official arrested Etienne Ntiginzigo in Kigwena zone, Rumonge commune and province (southwest of the country) on April 13, 2018. Relatives report that he is the local representative of the opposition party FNL. The order to arrest him was given by the Kigwena zone chief who accuses him of organizing unauthorized political meetings.SOS-Torture Burundi notes arbitrary arrest and detention following political convictions of the victim.

3. South of the country: Campaign of intimidation in view of the Constitutional Referendum

The inhabitants of the Makamba and Rumonge provinces accuse the imbonerakure, young members of the CNDD-FDD party of intimidation against them. According to residents of Kibago commune, Makamba province and Burambi commune, Rumonge province, these young activists of the ruling party gather before running in the streets of their respective communes. They ran, all in party uniform, with boats in hand singing slogans against political opponents and proclaiming their support for President Nkurunziza. They warn anyone who would be against President Nkurunziza's regime. The lyrics of songs sung by these young imbonerakure scare the inhabitants. They intimidate political opponents by telling them that they have no place in Burundi.

"Nkurunziza took power, we support him, he will never give up. Those who will try to oppose his regime will be mended if they do not take the path of exile," they sang Saturday, April 14, 2018.

For these residents, these sports activities in Burambi commune of Rumonge province follow a meeting held last week by CNDD-FDD Party President Isaac Ndikuriyo, with all the youth of the ruling party at the communal level in the capital of Burambi commune. According to the testimonies collected, the announced objective of this meeting is to prepare these young imbonerakure to intimidate the population especially in this period close to the constitutional referendum.

Sos-Torture / Burundi notes a campaign of intimidation. Many Burundians, and especially political opponents, have been subjected to harassment, threats and intimidation since President Nkurunziza himself announced plans to revise the Burundian Constitution.



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 the serious human rights violations under way in Burundi through monitoring reports, particularly on torture, arbitrary arrests, forced disappearances, sexual violence and summary executions.

This initiative to inform about the realities of the country followed the slaughter of a hundred people killed during the day of December 11 and 12, 2015 by the police and military on the pretext of pursuing rebels who came to attack military camps on the outskirts of the capital City.

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

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