

REPORT N ° 112 OF SOS-TORTURE / BURUNDI ISSUED ON 3 FEBRUARY 2018

This SOS-Torture report covers the period between January 27 and February 3, 2018, about cases of human rights violations and abuses in Burundi.

At least six (6) cases of arbitrary arrests are recorded during the period in different locations. Most of these people are victims of having expressed an opinion on the constitutional referendum planned in May 2018 by the Burundian government. Opponents of this revision are constantly arrested, beaten and repressed by members of the ruling party, mostly imbonerakure militiamen.

A young man with a hearing impairment was beaten to death by a group of imbonerakure militiamen, and no prosecution against the alleged criminals in Ruyigi. Another victim was tortured and left in critical condition by another group of imbonerakure militiamen in Makamba during an illegal search.

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

- Unidentified individuals attacked with grenades Ndabashinze's home in Magara, Bugarama commune, Rumonge province, (southwest of the country), on 30 January 2018. Witnesses reported that the grenade did not injure anyone.

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

- Individuals murdered a man whose only name identified was his nickname 'Kamotsi' on Mubavu hill, Bweru commune, Ruyigi province (East of the country) on January 22, 2018. Witnesses report that the young man suffered from a disability auditory known to several local inhabitants, and worked as a servant to local catechists.

Sos-Torture Burundi learned that the young man was murdered with clubs by a group of young imbonerakure militiamen who tried to smuggle the crime into a flagrant case of theft. Witnesses report that the perpetrators of his murder put police attire and a bayonet on the body of the victim to portray him as a criminal. Police have not identified any suspects to date.

- National Intelligence Service (NIS) agents abducted Jonas Uwimana and Johnson Nzobarimpa from their place of detention at Cibitoke province police station (in the north-west of the country). Relatives report that the two young men were arrested on Buhayira hill, Murwi commune, Cibitoke province a few days earlier for 'participation in armed groups'.

Sos-Torture Burundi learned from several witnesses that Jonas Uwimana and Johnson Nzobarimpa were violently tied up and loaded into a pick-up belonging to Cibitoke chief of intelligence, without their destination being communicated to relatives. The safety of the two young men must be ensured by the NIS, and their place of detention communicated.

- The body of Mathieu Nzoyisaba was discovered on Ntande hill, Gisuru commune, Ruyigi province (east of the country) on February 1, 2018. Witnesses report that the body hung on a rope fixed to a tree.

SOS-Torture Burundi notes that police have not yet determined the circumstances of Mr. Nzoyisaba's death.

2. Violations of the right to liberty and physical security

- Members of the Imbonerakure militiamen tortured Karenzo on Kibago hill, Kibago commune, Makamba province (south of the country) on 25 January 2018 at night. Relatives report that these militiamen are conducting night patrols, and have forced Mr. Karenzo's household to search him illegally without any qualifications or mandate. The imbonerakure militiamen found nothing in the house, and decided to repeatedly hit the victim.

Sos-Torture Burundi talks about home invasion, an illegal search and the violence of the imbonerakure militiamen towards the victim. Witnesses report that two of the militiamen members have been identified: Nihorimbere and Tanu. The perpetrators of the violence also threatened Karenzo in the case of prosecution.

The police remain also accomplice because no investigation file has been opened. Several residents of Kibago commune report having been subjected to similar night searches, which aim to maintain fear.

- Police agents arrested Pascal Kakana on Rwibaga hill, Ijenda zone, Mugongomanga commune, Bujumbura province (about 30 kilometers southeast of Bujumbura town) on 27 January 2018. Witnesses report that Mr. Kakana was

arrested on the orders of Mugongomanga's communal administrator, after charges were laid against him by a ruling CNDD FDD party executive. Mr.Kakana is a plecturerr at University of Burundi (public university) who were drinking a beer at a local bar during his arrest.

Sos-Torture Burundi notes arbitrary arrest and detention without evidence of the charges against the victim. The police released Professor Pascal Kakana on January 29, 2018 without explanation on the reasons for his detention.

- Police agents arrested Hadj Ndorimana on Muhembuzi hill, Gatare zone, Busoni commune, Kirundo province (north of the country) on 29 January 2018. Witnesses report that Mr. Ndorimana is a teacher who was at his post at Muhembuzi Primary School during his arrest. The director of the school accused him of irregularity at work, and called police agents.

Sos-Torture Burundi notes arbitrary arrest and detention, motivated by charges that do not constitute grounds for incarceration. The headmaster later charged Ndorimana with an attempted murder. Relatives also report that Mr. Ndorimana is an active member of FNL opposition party (National Front for liberation) faithful to Agathon Rwasa, in charge of the youth wing of this party, which was forced to flee his residence in Gatare following the threats and intimidation of the youth of the imbonerakure militiamen. The arrest of Hadj Ndorimana would be politically motivated.



#Mr Hadj Ndorimana, Youth Leader of the FNL (opposition) arrested in Kirundo

- Members of the imbonerakure militiamen arrested Charles Ncuti and John Ciza in the center of Rugombo commune, Cibitoke province (north-west of the

country) on January 29, 2018. Witnesses report that both men are victims of having expressed their choice not to enlist as a voter for the constitutional referendum initiated by the Burundian government.

Sos-Torture Burundi notes an unlawful arrest by unauthorized persons, in this case members of the imbonerakure militiamen. One must also note a violation of freedom of political opinion. Since the announcement of a referendum to change the Constitution, the crackdown has intensified to threaten anyone considering not participating in the process or voting for "no" in the referendum.

The police of Rugombo commune detained the two men without any file and despite their illegal arrest.

- People close to Mr. Jean Claude Habonayo report that this teacher is the victim of threats, and accused of sensitizing students to vote "no" in the constitutional referendum. He was summoned by a joint security committee (composed of civilians, police and administration) to Jimbi Hill, Kibago Commune, Makamba Province on 29 January 2018 to respond to the charges against him.

Sos-Torture Burundi notes constant intimidation. Witnesses also reported that an awareness campaign was conducted in schools of Kibago and Mabanda communes to encourage students to vote for the revision of the Constitution.

- Police agents arrested Jean Baptiste Nkundabahizi on Kabanga Hill, Busoni commune, Kirundo province (in the north of the country) on 30 January 2018. Relatives report that Nkundabahizi is an activist of the opposition party Frodebu-Nyakuri (of which the party president lives in exile since the beginning of the crisis). He is accused of sensitizing the "no" vote in the constitutional referendum of May 2018 scheduled by the Burundian government.

Sos-Torture Burundi notes that Mr. Nkundabahizi, like other opposition activists, is the victim of political intolerance and repression. The number of people detained and repressed for expressing an opinion contrary to the draft revision of the Constitution is constantly growing.

3. The inhabitants of Rumonge report the presence of wounded fighters

Sos-Torture Burundi has learned about the presence of several wounded people in the center of Rumonge (south-west of the country), fleeing armed fighting in the east of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Witnesses report having seen about

thirty Congolese combatants arriving at Rumonge, after crossing the Lake Tanganyika separating the DRC and Burundi.

These fighters mingle with civilian populations fleeing the ongoing fighting. Witnesses mention at least four (4) seriously wounded among the 30 combatants who landed, taken to Rumonge Hospital for treatment. Sos-Torture Burundi is also aware of allegations that among some of these Congolese combatants who belong to the May-May rebel group were carrying weapons.

The Burundian authorities must ensure the disarmament of people from these areas of combat, to be certain that no armed fighter entered and ensure the safety of the inhabitants of Rumonge.



Witnesses report that this wounded man would be part of the group of Mai-Mai fighters who arrived in Rumonge



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, 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 rebel group which came to attack military camps on the outskirts of Bujumbura 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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