

SOS-TORTURE/BURUNDI REPORT No. 126 PUBLISHED ON 12 MAY 2018

This report of SOS-Torture covers the period between May 5 to 12, 2018 concerning cases of human rights violations in Burundi.

At least thirty (30) persons were murdered during the period, including twenty-six (26) persons murdered by an unidentified armed group on Ruhagarika Hill, Buganda Commune, Cibitoke Province (North-West of the country). The attack would have also made about ten wounded. A six years girl was raped, and her attacker escaped due to the complicity of local authorities.

Attacks on opposition activists reported in recent weeks, particularly those of the FNL party faithful to Agathon Rwasa, have not decreased their intensity. At least twenty-three (23) militants of this party were victims of beatings, torture and arbitrary arrests in different localities. Most of the victims were attacked by members of the imbonerakure militiamen on their return from Amizero y'Abarundi coalition meetings (of which FNL is founder), the coalition having decided to fight for the "no" vote campaign for the referendum.

In this referendum campaign, hate speech and threats are pronounced by senior officials of the ruling party. Sos-Torture Burundi highlights in this pronounced in Muhuta, Rumonge province.

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

- An individual raped a six-year-old girl (JN) on Giko Hill, commune and Bubanza province (west of the country) on May 2, 2018. Relatives say that the alleged rapist has been identified: he is Ngendabanyikwa (52 years) nicknamed Mufaransi. The victim suffered a serious assault that resulted into physical damage, according to relatives.

Sos-Torture Burundi notes that an arrest warrant has been issued, and that the police is looking for the alleged rapist. Witnesses report, however, that the main suspect was able to escape before his arrest under to the complicity of Giko hill chief named Oscar Gasereka and some members of the imbonerakure militiamen, who didn't want that the wanted man (also a member of the poplitical party on power) to be stopped.

- Unidentified individuals armed with machetes and guns murdered twenty-six persons (26) and a dozen others wounded on Ruhagarika Hill, Buganda Commune, Cibitoke Province (North-West of the Country) on 11 May 2018 in the evening.

SOS-Torture / Burundi says that the police have not yet identified any suspects, but talks about terrorists from the Democratic Republic of Congo.

- The body of a man named Nzikobanyanka (70 years) was found in the area of Kinywangurube, Mugege hill, Butaganzwa commune, Ruyigi province (eastern part of the country) on May 5, 2018. Witnesses say that the body was wounded on head.

Sos-Torture Burundi notes that the police announced the arrest of a man who accompanied him the night before to determine the circumstances of the victim's death.

- Unidentified individuals murdered a man whose body was discovered in an uninhabited space in Buhinyuza quarter, Kinama zone, Ntakangwa commune (north of Bujumbura city) on May 7, 2018. The body of the victim was head cut, and held signs of injury. The executioners left a note on the body mentioning: "*ubunwa burahanwa, uzize inkoho zacu wagiye kuvuga aho zibitswe*" in kirundi or "*hanged tongue must be corrected, you are punished for having revealed our weapon hide*" in French.

Sos-Torture Burundi considers a summary execution, with a will of the executioners to hide the identity of the victim cutting the heading. Police have not yet identified this man, nor identified the suspect.



The body of the victim discovered in Kinama, without a head. The message left by the executioners is visible on the body.

- Soldiers shot dead two persons at Mutakura quarter, Butererezone, Ntakangwa commune (north of Bujumbura city) on May 7, 2018 at night. Witnesses say that the persons who were shot had just seriously injured a mother with a panger during a robbery. They were shot while fleeing after the arrival of soldiers on patrol.

Sos-Torture Burundi notes that the police did not communicate the identities of the two persons shot dead, and announced the arrest of two other accomplices.

2. Violations of the right to liberty and physical security

- Members of the Imbonerakure militiamen arrested Muyubira and Nzisabira in the in the town of Bubanza province (west of the country) on 4 May 2018. Witnesses report that the arrest was carried out by a man François Nizigiyimana and in the presence of two police agents. The two arrested men are militants of the opposition party FNL accused of tearing up a campaign advertisement of the ruling party CNDD FDD.

Sos-Torture Burundi notes an illegal arrest by members of the imbonerakure militiamen. Similar arrests have increased since the beginning of the

referendum campaign, FNL militants being the victims of their campaign for the rejection of the draft revision of the Constitution. The two (2) activists are detained in the police cell of Bubanza police station without a record.

- Police agents arrested six (6) members of the opposition party FNL belonging to the MP Agathon Rwasa in Musongati commune, Rutana province (south-east of the country) on May 2, 2018. Witnesses report that they are accused of collecting a contribution without consent. The six (6) activists were holding a note from the leadership of the political coalition Amizero y'Abarundi calling on activists to contribute to the ongoing referendum campaign.

Sos-Torture Burundi notes that the decision to arrest these militants comes from the deputy public prosecutor Rutana Province. The relatives of those arrested denounce political harassment and false pretext to incarcerate them.

- Members of the Imbonerakure militiamen violently attacked Felix Niyukuri on Buheka Hill, Nyanza Lake Commune, Makamba Province (southern of the country) on May 5, 2018 evening. This aggression took place during the night patrols of the militiamen, considered by the population as acts of intimidation. Relatives report that Mr. Niyukuri was beaten several times, and left dying with wounds along the body.

- Sos-Torture Burundi notices that the victim of torture complained to the police. The judicial police officer in charge, however, did not investigate the case, but let local officials of the imbonerakure militiamen handle the case. This did not allow the victim to recover his rights, and demonstrates that the police are implicated if not complicit in the abuses of members of the imbonerakure militiamen.

- The head of the national intelligence service of Ryansoro commune arrested Sebastien Misago on Murama hill, Ryansoro commune, Gitega province (center of the country) on May 5, 2018 in the evening. Relatives report that the intelligence officer stopped him at his home without a warrant. He accuses him of campaigning for the "no" for the referendum of May 17, 2018.

- Sos-Torture Burundi notes arbitrary arrest and detention of Mr. Misago. Relatives also report that he is an active member of the opposition FNL party faithful to Agathon Rwasa. The arrest of Mr. Misago seems strongly motivated by his political convictions.

- Members of the imbonerakure militiamen interrupted classes and forced students and teachers of Musanga Basic School, Makamba commune and province (south of the country) to go to a referendum meeting of the ruling party CNDD FDD on May 7, 2018. Witnesses report that the militiamen also took away all class seats to the meeting venue.

- Sos-Torture Burundi notes a violation of children's rights, and harassment even in school premises. Parents reported that students who are forced to attend the meeting are not eligible to vote, in addition to being forced to stop classes.

- The police commissioner of Kirundo province and the head of the intelligence service of this province confiscated the material of a VOA radio correspondent journalist (Voice of America) in the north of the country on May 7, 2018. The journalist Jean Bosco Ndarurinze was warned by officials of the ruling CNDD FDD party in Kirundo, who denied him the right to cover the party's referendum campaign on Nyarunazi Hill, Busoni commune, Kirundo province (north of the country). The journalist's working material was confiscated by the head of the SNR Kirundo the same day, and was given to him a few hours later with the order to erase all his recordings.

Sos-Torture Burundi notes a harassment of the VOA radio reporter, following the decision of the authorities to suspend the right of VOA and BBC international radions to broadcast in Burundi (see Sos-Torture Burundi report N ° 125: <http://sostortureburundi.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/SOS-Torture-Burundi-num%C3%A9ro-125-en-En.pdf>). This decision, taken during the referendum campaign, does not concern the work of journalists who must enjoy the freedom to inform.

- Members of the imbonerakure militiamen beat several opposition FNL militants returning from a referendum meeting held in the center of Ruyigi province (East of the country) on May 8, 2018. Relatives report that five (5) FNL militants were intercepted and beaten by imbonerakure militiamen in Bweru. The same attackers seized a motorcycle with a flag with the "no" on it, and took the motorcycle to the Ruyigi police. Another group of four (4) FNL militants were assaulted on Kwisumo in Butezi commune on their return from this meeting.

Sos-Torture Burundi notes that the police did not arrest any of the alleged perpetrators, and did not explain the reasons for seizing the motorcycle belonging to one of the FNL party members.

- Signs of political intolerance, accentuated since the beginning of the referendum campaign, are also the speeches of threats of senior officials of the CNDD FDD ruling party during the the campaign. Witnesses report that Majority MP Leonidas Mukeshimana of the parliament majority made hate speeches to opponents at during the campaign in the center of Muhuta commune, Rumonge province (southwest of the country) on May 8, 2018. He said that all the supporters of the "no" vote to the revision of the Constitution will be hunted down in their hidden area ("*abigisha 'oya' tuzobirukako n'ibirenge bishuhe*").

Sos-Torture Burundi notes that these threats are similar to other hate speeches and political intolerance by members of the ruling party. In previous reports, Sos-Torture Burundi had expressed concern that cases of threats, intimidation, harassment and attacks on opposition activists would increase.

- Policeagents arrested Nephtalie Kwizera in the Gasanda zone, Bururi commune and province (south of the country) on May 8, 2018. Relatives report that this man is accused of having expressed his will to vote in favor of "no "In the referendum of May 17, 2018. Mr. Kwizera is a teacher of the communal college, and member of FNL opposition party .

Sos-Torture Burundi consider an arbitrary arrest and detention. It is also a violation of the political freedoms and the right of expression of which this teacher is the victim. The police also did not explain the charges against this man.

- Members of the Imbonerakure militiamen arrested Emelyne Nihorimbere, Laurent and another young man on Karonke Hill, Minago zone, Rumonge commune and province (south-west of the country) on May 9, 2018. Relatives report that the three persons are activists from the FNL opposition party, victims of their political affiliation. The group of militiamen was acting under the command of the chief hill of Karonke.

Sos-Torture Burundi notes that relatives have no news of the three (3) persons intercepted by imbonerakure militiamen. They were arrested illegally, accused of campaigning outside regular hours and stealing campaign material from their party, according to relatives.



SOS-Torture / Burundi was initiated with the objective 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 soldiers 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 Hal.

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