

SOS-TORTURE/BURUNDI REPORT N ° 140 PUBLISHED ON 18 AUGUST 2018

This SOS-Torture/Burundi report covers the period between 11 and 18 August 2018 concerning cases of human rights violations in Burundi.

At least three (3) people were murdered during the period in different localities. Among the victims, include a man who had already escaped a first assassination attempt in Kirundo.

The report also notes nearly sixty-six (66) cases of arbitrary arrests. These cases concern groups of fishermen, evangelists, young participants in a seminar and young men looking for travel documents.

Sos-Torture/Burundi also denounce the unfair condemnation of a human rights defender Nestor Nibitanga. This activist member of the Burundian Association for the Protection of Human Rights and Detained Persons (APRODH) has been sentenced to 5 years in prison for continuing to report cases of human rights violations after striking out of his organization.

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

- In the evening of August 13, 2018 a man murdered Alfred Nimbona in Village III, Gihanga Commune, Bubanza Province (West of the Country). Relatives report that the victim received a fatal blow to the head.

Sos-Torture/Burundi notes that the police arrested the victim's brother as the main suspect. He would have used a hoe to commit this murder.

- In the evening of August 13, 2018 individuals armed with grenades murdered Ndagijimana (55 years) on Munzenze hill, Kirundo commune and province (north of the country). Witnesses report that the perpetrators threw two (2) grenades into the victim's home.

Sos-Torture/Burundi notes that Kirundo police have announced the arrest of a suspect, a certain Leopold Bashirahishize. The police have not yet confirmed the evidence of the involvement of this man in the assassination of Mr. Ndagijimana. Sos-Torture/Burundi also learned from relatives that this was a second attack at the victim's home.

- One (or more) individual (s) murdered Batakanwa (65 years) in a valley of Kayongozi zone, Bweru commune, Ruyigi province (East of the country) on August 15, 2018. Witnesses report that the victim was slit and beheaded with a knife.

Sos-Torture/Burundi notes that the police have announced the arrest of a suspect. Relatives also report that Mr. Batakanwa had already been threatened with death, and forced to flee Nkanda hill where he resided following these threats. Accusations of witchcraft practices against Mr. Batakanwa would have made him hide for his safety. Several murders reported in Ruyigi and other provinces refer to suspicions of witchcraft to explain targeted killings.

2. Violations of the right to liberty and physical security

- On August 13, 2018 soldiers arrested twenty-two (22) people at Rusizi River in the Gatumba zone, Mutimbuzi commune, Bujumbura province a few kilometers from Gihanga commune (west of the country). Witnesses report that these people are fishermen operating in a backwater called Kukameme. The local soldiers took them to the police cell of the public prosecutor's office in Bubanza.

Sos-Torture/Burundi notes that these men are accused of working in collusion with armed groups who have carried out deadly ambushes in Gihanga in recent months (see **Sos-Torture Burundi report N ° 139**: <http://sostortureburundi.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/SOS-Torture-Burundi-num%C3%A9ro-139.pdf>). No evidence of these charges has been yet presented to the arrested anglers

- Police agents arrested Claver Ndikumasabo in the center of Bururi commune and province (south of the country) on August 13, 2018. This is a magistrate of the Intermediate Court of Bururi. Witnesses report that he was arrested after a fight with the representative of Bururi imbonerakure militiamen in a local bar.

Sos-Torture/Burundi notes that Mr. Ndikumasabo was taken directly to Bururi Prison. The case was also brought before Bururi Court of Appeal for a hearing following the flagrancy procedure. Sos-Torture/Burundi also notes a speed in the progress of this case, and the indictment of a single individual for a case of brawl involving at least two people. There is fear that Mr. Ndikumasabo may be the victim of an expeditious justice, in a case involving a leader of the ruling party's imbonerakure militia, which also proves the power of the party's militiamen and the manipulation of the Justice.

- Members of imbonerakure militiamen violently attacked Mathieu Ndayisenga in Bibara zone, Mutumba commune, Karusi province on August 14, 2018. Relatives report that the victim is an activist of FNL opposition party faithful to Agathon Rwasa.

Sos-Torture/Burundi notes violence of aggression aimed at a political opponent. The police did not arrest any of the alleged perpetrators, although the victim was able to identify them: Jean Claude Hankanimana and Sylvestre (both members of the local imbonerakure militiamen).

- National Intelligence Service agents arrested seven (7) people at Gitega immigration police office in the center of the country on August 16, 2018. Eyewitnesses reported that those arrested were waiting to receive their travel documents of the Economic Community of Great Lakes Countries (CEPGL) allowing them to travel to the DRC and Rwanda.

Sos-Torture/Burundi notes that the SNR agents gave no reason for these arrests. Witnesses report that all the young men arrested are residents of Butaganzwa commune, Ruyigi province (East of the country).

- Police agents arrested sixteen (16) persons in hotel of the center of Mabanda commune, Makamba province (south of the country) on August 17, 2018. Eyewitnesses report that the arrests were the result of a search made in the hotel. Those arrested are Christians who are members of the Coalition of Churches for the Harvest, on evangelisation mission in Mabanda for a week at the time of the arrests.

Sos-Torture/Burundi notes that the police did not give any explanation on the reasons for the arrests. The arrested persons had in their possession a letter

attesting to their mission of evangelization, which the local authorities had also received.

- Police agents arrested about 20 persons in the center of Makamba commune and province (south of the country) on August 17, 2018. Witnesses report that they are young people from different political parties, arrested while they attended a seminar organized by the Burundi Leadership Training Program (BLTP).

Sos-Torture/Burundi notes that the organizers, also arrested, had in their possession a legal order of mission signed by the Ministry of internal affairs with which the NGO collaborates. The police gave no reason for these arrests. The order to call the participants of this seminar was issued by the governor of Makamba Gad Niyukuri. Sos-Torture/Burundi further notes that the governor of Makamba has already been cited in several cases of arrests of political opponents.

3. **Human rights activist unfairly condemned**

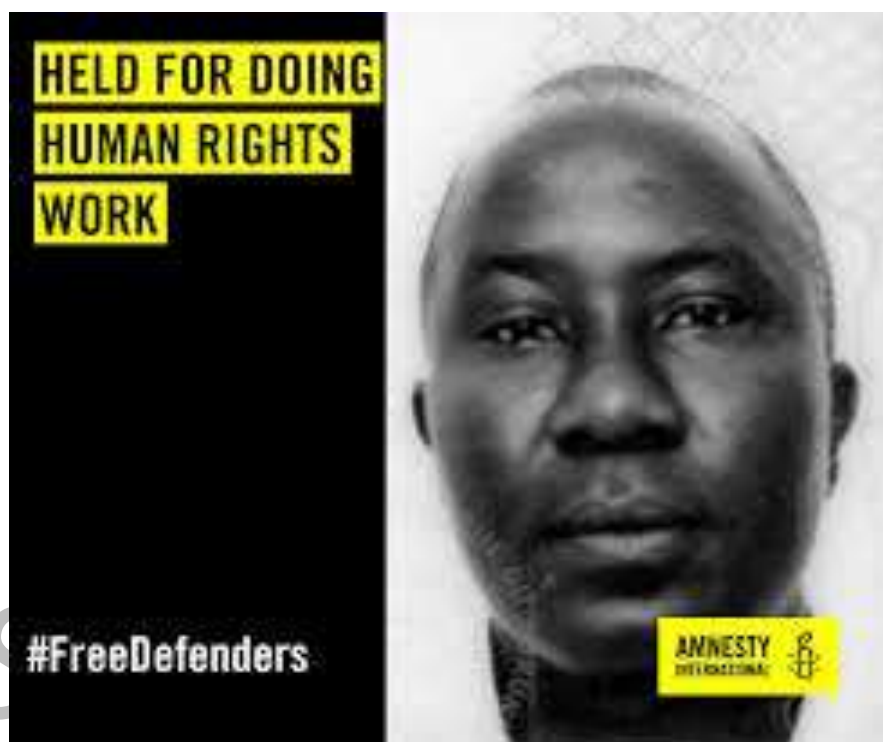
Sos-Torture/Burundi learned about the conviction of Mr. Nestor Nibitanga to 5 years in prison, by Mukaza Intermediate Court on August 13, 2018. Mr. Nibitanga is a member of the organization APRODH (Burundian Association for Protection Human Rights and Detained Persons). He was arrested in Gitega (center of the country) on November 21, 2017 for undermining the security of the state (**see report Sos-Torture Burundi No. 102: <http://sostortureburundi.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/SOS-Torture-Burundi-nums%CC%81ro-102-en-Fr.pdf>**).

Sos-Torture/Burundi notes the unfair condemnation of an activist a human rights defender, as well as Mr. Germain Rukuki (member of the organization Acat-Burundi also condemned). Nestor Nibitanga is accused of providing reports on the human rights situation in the center of the country, while the Burundian government has deregistered the organization APRODH.

This is a rage against some human rights defenders in Burundi, many of their colleagues having already been forced into exile. Sos-Torture/Burundi also notes the enforced disappearance of other activists, such as Claudette Kwizera (Finance



Officer of Ligue Iteka), who has disappeared since 10 December 2015 after being arrested by agents of the National Intelligence Service (see report N ° 6 of Sos-Torture Burundi: <http://sostortureburundi.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/SOS-TORTURE-BURUNDI-RAPPORT-N%C2%B06.pdf>).



Nestor Nibitanga, unfairly sentenced to 5 years in prison (Amnesty International campaign photo)



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, enforced 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 11 and 12 December, 2015 by the police and military under the pretext of pursue rebels who came from attack military camps on the outskirts of the capital city

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

SOS-TORTURE