

REPORT NO. 216 OF SOS-TORTURE/BURUNDI PUBLISHED ON FEBRUARY 1, 2020

This report of SOS-Torture/Burundi covers the period from 25 January to 1 February 2020 concerning cases of human rights violations and abuses in Burundi.

At least one person was murdered in Mwaro province during the period and one victim survived a grenade attack in Bururi province.

Cases of arbitrary arrest are recorded: at least five (5) cases are recorded and concern all members of the opposition. The report also refers to the unjustified sentencing of four Iwacu journalists.

1. Violations of the right to life and physical integrity

- Unidentified individuals murdered Grégoire Nijimbere (47) whose body was found floating in Kaniga river crossing Ndava commune, Mwaro province (Central of the country) on 28 January 2020.

Sos-Torture/Burundi notes that Ndava police have not identified any suspects to date. The victim's body was held in a morgue until his next of kin confirmed the I. D.

- Individuals attacked by Grenada a household of Bihanga Hill, Matana Commune, Bururi Province (south of the country) on the evening of January 31, 2020. Relatives report that Mr Frédéric Gateretse was seriously wounded in the head and belly during the attack.

Sos-Torture/Burundi notes that police in Matana have not identified any suspects to date.

2. Violations of the right to liberty and physical security

- Members of the imbonerakure militia arrested Ferdinand Niyonkuru and Joël Kubwimana on Nyangungu Hill, Mutaho commune, Gitega province (Central) on 23 January 2020. Relatives report that both men are members of the opposition CNL (National Congress for Freedom) Party. They are victims of self-defence in an attack by the ruling party militia, resulting in injuries on both sides.

Sos-Torture/Burundi notes the illegal arrests and the complicity of the Mutaho police officers who detained the two opposition members without legal grounds.

- Police officers arrested Céléus Nzungu, Emmanuel Nduwimana and Emmanuel Mushimantwari in Bugorora area, Bwambarangwe commune, Kirundo province (north of the country) on 23 January 2020. Relatives report that these people are activists of CNL opposition party. Mr. Nzungu is accused of failing to rescue Bubogora zone chief while he was struggling with residents of his constituency. The other two opposition members are accused of defamation against Burundian President Pierre Nkurunziza.

Sos-Torture/Burundi notes arbitrary arrests of members of the opposition, in this case the CNL party. The charges against them appear to be a pretext for silencing any dissenting voices in power.

- Sos-Torture/Burundi learned of the unjustified conviction of Iwacu journalists to two and a half years in prison by the High Court of Bubanza (Western Burundi) on 30 January 2020. Journalists Agnès Ndirubusa, Christine Kamikakazi, Terence Mpozenzi and Aegis Harerimana were arrested on 22 October 2019 while covering the incursion of Burundian rebels from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (see Sos report-torture Burundi No. 202: <https://sostortureburundi.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/SOS-Torture-Burundi-num%C3%A9ro-202.pdf>).

Sos-Torture/Burundi notes that the charges against journalists violate freedom of expression and freedom of the Press by condemning journalists while carrying out their duties.



The four journalists unjustly convicted by TGI Bubanza

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

This initiative to inform on the realities of the country followed the carnage of a hundred people killed during the day of December 11 and 12, 2015 by police and military under the pretext of pursuing rebels who had just attacked military camps located on the outskirts of the capital city.

The affected areas are said to be the protestors of the third term of President Nkurunziza, namely Musaga, Mutakura, Cibitoke, Nyakabiga, Jabe, the last two being located in the center of the Town Hall of Bujumbura.