

REPORT NO. 226 OF SOS-TORTURE/BURUNDI PUBLISHED ON APRIL 4, 2020

This SOS-Torture/Burundi report covers the period from 4 to 11 April 2020 concerning cases of human rights violations and abuses in Burundi.

At least four (4) people were killed during the period in different localities. Two (2) other persons, including a 2-year-old child, escaped assassination attempts. Among those murdered, two people have been identified.

The report also refers to four (4) cases of arbitrary arrests; one (1) cases of abduction and violations committed by members of the imbonerakure militia.

One case of obstruction of justice is also mentioned: it is the refusal of the prosecutor's Office of Bururi to execute a judicial decision aimed at the provisional release of nine (9) persons.

1. Violations of the right to life and physical integrity

- On April 3, 2020, a police officer named mediatrice Mukeshimana attempted to kill the child from a second household of her ex-husband by pouring boiling water on his body at his home in Buganda municipality, Cibitoke province (northwest of the country). Witnesses report that the police officer had just quarreled with the child's mother before committing the irreparable.

Sos-Torture/Burundi notes that neighbours helped the child to evacuate him to the hospital following his very critical state of Health. The same neighbors tried to get justice by beating the alleged criminal as a result of anger. Sos-Torture/Burundi notes that the police arrested the police officer.

- On April 5, 2020 Individuals murdered Sinarinzi (49 years old) on Gitaramuka Hill, Rutana municipality and province (southeast of the country). Relatives report that the perpetrators are members of the imbonerakure militia who accused him of stealing cows.

Sos-Torture/Burundi notes that the police of Rutana arrested two imbonerakure militiamen as part of the investigation into the assassination.

- Unidentified individuals murdered Gregoria Ndayisaba, whose body was discovered in her home on Kagoma Hill, Vyanda commune, Bururi province (south of the country) on 8 April 2020. Relatives report that the victim's body had several machete wounds.

Sos-Torture/Burundi notes that the police in Vyanda have not arrested any suspects to date but concludes that Ms. Ndayisaba was killed elsewhere before her executioners brought the body back to her home.

- An unidentified armed group attacked the home of Juvenal Hicuburundi on Rukuba Hill, Kanyosha commune, Bujumbura province on the night of 8-9 April 2020. Witnesses report that the victim identified youth from the imbonerakure militia among the perpetrators of the attack. Mr. Hicuburundi is the municipal secretary of the opposition party CNL.

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

- Unidentified individuals murdered two people whose bodies were discovered on transverse 2, Ndava hill, Ndava area, Buganda commune, Cibitoke province (North-West of the country) on April 11, 2020. Witnesses report that the victims were tied together with ribbon.

Sos-Torture/Burundi notes that the victims have not been identified by the locals or by the police. This is also an execution committed elsewhere, the executioners having got rid of the bodies there so that they could not be identified. Sos-Torture/Burundi also notes that the local administration has ordered the immediate burial of the victims, without allowing for thorough investigations.

2. Violations of the right to liberty and physical security

- Soldiers removed Come Niyongabo from a transport vehicle in Kabezi commune, Bujumbura province on April 3, 2020. Witnesses report that the military had been ordered to arrest a military man named Kageregere who was travelling in a minibus from Mabanda municipality, Makamba province (south of the country) to the city of Bujumbura, he was alleged to have participated in the attempt coup of May 2015.

Sos-Torture/Burundi notes abduction, as Mr. Niyongabo's family having no news of him. Relatives also report that Mr. Niyongabo is a retired soldier from the former Burundian Armed Forces (Ex-FAB). There is a risk to the safety of this man.

- Police officers arrested Hadj Ndorimana in the centre of Kirundo municipality and province (north of the country) on 3 April 2020. Witnesses report that he was taken on board of a vehicle of the provincial police station and taken to the Kirundo prosecutor's cell.

Sos-Torture/Burundi notes that Mr. Ndorimana and his relatives were not notified of the reasons for his arrest. Relatives also report that he is an activist of the opposition party CNL (National Congress for freedom).

- Members of the imbonerakure militia attempted to storm the local CNL party headquarters on Cunyu Hill, Buganda commune, Cibitoke province (northwest of the country) on the evening of April 6, 2020. Witnesses report that CNL party members present stepped in, triggering a fight and there were injuries on both sides of the activists.

Sos-Torture/Burundi notes the incessant provocations of members of the ruling party against opposition activists. Police officers intervened to stop the violence and evacuate the wounded.

- Members of the imbonerakure militia assaulted Saido Rukundaneza, driver of the private radio Isanganiro, before piercing the tires of the radio's vehicle on Rukuba Hill, Kanyosha municipality, Bujumbura province on April 9, 2020. Witnesses report that the driver was waiting for the return of a reporter from the same radio that went to report on the attack carried out the previous day against a local family. The family concerned is said to be a victim of membership in the opposition CNL party. It accuses, inter alia, imbonerakure militiamen of attacking him (see the first section of this report).

Sos-Torture/Burundi notes a nth attack against journalists in the exercise of their functions. The police have not apprehended any of the attackers to date.

- Members of the imbonerakure militia arrested Jerome Bucumi, Richard Niyimbeshaho and Amissi Dushimirimana on Munanira Hill, musigati commune, Bubanza province (west of the country) on 9 April 2020. Relatives report that the three men are activists



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of CNL opposition party. They were arrested along the way while they were on their way to their party's local headquarters. They are accused by the militiamen of the ruling party of teaching the ideology of CNL party in households.

Sos-Torture/Burundi notes illegal arrests by members of the ruling CNDD-FDD party. The fear is an increase in cases of political intolerance within a few weeks of the election deadline.

- Sos-Torture/Burundi has learned of the refusal of Bururi prosecutor's office to execute a judicial decision granting provisional release to nine (9) persons since 30 March 2020. The decision to release them was taken by the council chamber of the High Court of Bururi. According to relatives, the nine people are activists of CNL opposition party accused of having participated in the murder of a member of the ruling party named Eric Niyongabo.

These are Pierre Nzoyihera, Noël Bizimana, Jean-Claude Niyongabo, Leonidas Niyongabo, Cyriaque Ndayizeye, Normand Bizimungu, Paul Mufyiri, David Niyakire and Claver Nshimirimana.

Sos-Torture/Burundi notes the denial of justice displayed by the Bururi prosecutor's office by refusing to execute a judicial decision.

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

This initiative to inform about the realities of the country followed the carnage of a hundred people killed during the day of 11 and 12 December 2015 by the 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 zones are said to be protesters 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.