



SOS – Torture/Burundi

Monitoring sur les cas de torture, les arrestations arbitraires, les disparitions forcées et les exécutions sommaires au Burundi

REPORT NO. 63 OF SOS-TORTURE / BURUNDI PUBLISHED ON 25TH FEBRUARY 2017

In this report of SOS-Torture which covers the period from 18th to 25th February 2017 talks about human rights violations that continue to be committed with impunity in Burundi.

The report refers to arbitrary arrests of twenty-two (22) during the above-described period and in various localities in the country. Among these arrests, fourteen (14) are linked to political motives, since they are militants of the opposition party FNL arrested in Ngozi and Rumonge, respectively in the north and south-east of the country. Only the FNL militants from Rumonge were lucky enough to be released. To these arrests include FNL militants who have undergone inhuman and degrading treatment, beaten in Gisuru (Ruyigi) by imbonerakure militiamen on order of the communal administrator.

Among the arbitrary arrests, SOS-Torture Burundi noted a large roundup in downtown Bujumbura, with the aim of ransoming hundred persons arrested. The report also details serious incidents at Rumonge prison, where the police guarding the prison fired real bullets at detainees, causing among them three wounded, and one seriously.

During the period, SOS-Torture Burundi noted two (2) cases of killings in Bujumbura and Gitega. The victims are all women, mothers of families. One of the victims was a member of the state-owned water and electricity management company Regideso.

The report also refers to the case of new expulsions of the inhabitants of Kagaragara zone from Gihanga commune to Bubanza. The administration chased more than five hundred (500) families without being able to relocate them. The same operation was carried out in December 2016. It is an inhuman treatment that does not take into account the vulnerability of these inhabitants, especially the women and children who make up the largest part of these households.

1. Arbitrary arrests, kidnappings and forced disappearances continue

- Persons in civilian clothes arrested Vianney Minani in Mutimbuzi, Bujumbura province (a few kilometers north-west of Bujumbura) on 17th February 2017. This man had just left his home in the Rubirizi zone. Witnesses report that the persons who conducted the arrest are imbonerakure militiamen of the ruling party CNDD-FDD.

SOS-Torture Burundi fears further forced disappearance with threat of execution since Mr. Minani was handed over to National Intelligence Service (SNR) agents who did not communicate his place of detention. The SNR must tell to the family where Vianney Minani is located and the motives behind the arrest. SOS Torture also considers it illegal since it was carried out by militiamen who do not have the prerogatives to arrest people but have gradually replaced security forces since the beginning of the crisis.

- Police agents Léopold Nibirantije in Mugera, Mishiha commune, Cankuzo province, on February 18th, 2017. He is accused of having circulated leaflets encouraging the murder of certain militants of the ruling party CNDD-FDD.

SOS-Torture Burundi notes that this arrest is arbitrary since it is not based on any evidence. The police must conduct a neutral and impartial investigation to identify the perpetrators of these leaflets inciting violence, especially as residents testify to a set-up aimed at silencing or arresting people who do not militate in the party on power.

- Police agents arrested eight (8) persons in Ngozi commune, Ngozi province (northern part of the country) on 19th February 2017. These persons are all members of the opposition FNL (National Front of Liberation) led by Agathon Rwaswa, current deputy president of the Burundian National Assembly. These were Nicodeme Kameya, Norbert Ciza, Benjamin Hitimana, Salvator Ndikumana, Francois Bukuru, Emile Mutabazi, Pascal Girabo and Albert Ngendahayo, and were in a bar at the time of their arrest.

SOS-Torture Burundi notes that after two days in the police station, the eight opponents were transferred to Ngozi Prison. They are accused of holding an unauthorized meeting. This is undoubtedly a harassment of members of the opposition, in this case FNL who are regularly victims of arbitrary arrests. Nothing can prove the charges of unauthorized assembly from the moment the persons were arrested in a public place, specifically a bar. The administration and police must stop the harassment of opposition activists.

- On the same day, 19th February 2017, eight other pro-Rwasa FNL militants were also arrested in Magara, Bugarama commune, in the southern province of Rumonge. They are 5 men and 3 women, the latter have been released in the evening. The administration also accuses them of holding an unauthorized meeting.

SOS-Torture Burundi notes that the governor of Rumonge intervened to demand the release of the other five militants after a night spent in the cell. These arrests of opponents confirm the political intolerance displayed by the Bujumbura power and relayed by zealous police officers.

-SOS-Torture Burundi also notes a non countable case of violence for political motives aiming FNL militants. The communal administrator of Gisuru, in the province of Ruyigi (east of the country), accompanied by the head of police station of the commune and the judicial police officer (JPO) of Gisuru suspended a meeting animated by a member of the parliament from the Amizero y'Abarundi coalition and member of the opposition party FNL on February 19th, 2017. With the help of militiamen imbonerakure of the CNDD-FDD party, these local authorities beat FNL militants present at the meeting, while the same authorities had been notified in advance of that meeting. Two of the victims of torture were seriously injured, only the deputy was spared from beatings.

This attitude is unacceptable and denotes an increasingly unprecedented violence on the part of the members of the ruling party in a silence complicit in the Burundian judiciary. The militiamen imbonerakure enjoy the protection of the police and the justice system and assume the right to commit abuses and are encouraged by the local authorities who also supervise them, in view of what happened in Gisuru, the administrator was in charge of the operation.

- Police agents arrested Elias Ngendakumana in Rugombo commune, Cibitoke province (north-western part of the country) on 21st February 2017. This is a local trader who was doing his business. The operation was conducted by Cibitoke Police Commissioner, Senior Police Officer 1 (OPP1) Eugene Bizindavyi.

SOS-Torture Burundi notes that Mr. Ngendakumana is accused of buying and collecting food for armed groups. These allegations are not supported by any evidence; In addition, no warrant was presented at the time of his arrest.

- Agents of the Riot Brigade conducted roundups in downtown Bujumbura near the former central market on 22nd February 2017. A hundred persons were arrested without distinction. The reason given is an identity check, but witnesses report

operations to ransom people. Each individual who did not have an identity card had to pay bribes to the police to be released; otherwise they were taken to the custody.

- Police agents arrested Athanase Ndayahundwa and Cyprien Niyonsaba nicknamed 'Kiyoya' in Burambi commune, Rumonge province (south of the country) on 22nd February 2017. The former is a retired soldier from the former Burundian Armed Forces (Ex-FAB) before their merger with the former members of the Parties or Political Movements armed (Ex-PMPA), and the second is its neighbor. Witnesses report that after their arrest, agents of the National Intelligence Service intervened to recover the two men and take them to the police cell of Rumonge.

SOS-Torture Burundi notes that no warrant was issued during the arrests or the release of charges against them. They were subsequently charged with illegal possession of weapons. However, no military effects were seized during the arrests or searches at their homes.

- Police agents arrested Egide Nduwimana on Ruhinga Hill, Mugamba commune, Bururi province, on 22nd February 2017. No warrant was presented to the young man, nor was any reason given at the time of the arrest.

- Prison police agents shot three prisoners at Rumonge prison (in southern of the country) on 23rd February 2017 during an attempted transfer of a prisoner. The detainee in question is Jean Marie Haragakiza, who also proves to be the representative of the detainees of the Rumonge prison. Detainees opposed the transfer and four other co-detainees: Libere Nininahazwe, Étienne Bizabishaka, Charles Nzeyimana and Sharif Nininahazwe, who were worried about the safety of their comrades during the transfer, the reasons for which had not been communicated. SOS-Torture Burundi notes that they arrived at the central prison in Mpimba (Bujumbura) on the same day.

The prisoners wounded by the police shots are Gilbert Nkurunziza, Ferdinand Nibizi and Cyriaque Sindayigaya. Witnesses in the prison report that he was seriously wounded by these shots and had to be evacuated the next day to a hospital in Bujumbura.

Another group of seven (7) detainees from Rumonge was transferred on 24th February 2017 to the Mpimba prison in Bujumbura. These include former police officer Michel Nurweze nicknamed 'Rwembe' (the Razor), cited in several cases of extrajudicial executions and convicted of attempted murder of another police officer; But also of Kevin, Khalim, Nikobamyé and Nicodème.



One of the gun-shot inmates receiving treatment at Rumonge Prison

2. Assassinations, summary executions and armed attacks

- Unidentified individuals murdered and threw the lifeless body of Mrs. Lydia Nibogora into the Kanyosha zone, Muha commune (south of Bujumbura) on 17th February 2017. The victim's body was found lying face down with her arms violently tied up in the back with deadly wounds to the face.

SOS Torture Burundi notes that it is a summary execution that the police have not yet been able to determine the circumstances in which the murder was committed, let alone establish the responsibilities, know the perpetrators of this heinous crime. Ms. Nibogora was an executive within the state company of water and electricity

Regideso. She was murdered after she left her office. The victim left two children and a husband.



The body of Mrs. Nibogora during her discovery in Kanyosha (left photo)

- The body of a murdered woman was discovered on Songa hill, commune and Gitega province (center of the country) on February 22nd, 2017. The victim is Générose Ntabangana (60 years old). The police have not identified any suspects of the assassination to date.

3. A new worried expulsion of several hundred families

The administration of Bubanza province in the west of the country forcibly evicted more than two thousand (2000) persons living in five hundred (500) households from their landholdings in Kagaragara in Buringa zone of Gihanga commune on 20th February 2017. These persons occupy these properties located at the entrance of the Rukoko nature reserve for several years, many of which have inherited their ancestors.

This is the second time that these families have been expelled from Kagaragara. The first expulsion dates back to December 18th, 2016 (cf report No. 54 of SOS-Torture Burundi:<http://sostortureburundi.over-blog.com/2016/12/rapport-n-54-de-sos-torture/burundi-> Published on 24 December-2016.html).



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SOS-Torture Burundi notes that just as two months ago, the decision was hasty to dislodge as many families of men, women and many children without the administration having prepared another place of reception for these this is an inhuman treatment that ignores the vulnerability of these people, especially children. The administration should have prepared a place of reception beforehand.

The SOS-Torture/Burundi campaign was initiated with the aim of informing national and international opinion on the 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 carnage of a hundred people killed during the day of 11th December and that of 12th December 2015 by the police and military under the pretext of tracking rebel groups who came to attack military camps on the outskirts of the capital.

The affected quarters are said to be challenging the third term of President Nkurunziza, these are Musaga, Mutakura, Cibitoke, Nyakabiga and Jabe, the last two being located in the center of Bujumbura.

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