



REPORT No. 94 OF SOS-TORTURE / BURUNDI PUBLISHED ON SEPTEMBER 30, 2017

This report of SOS-Torture Burundi covers the period from 23 to 30 September 2017 concerning the violation of human rights in Burundi.

At least seven (7) persons were assassinated during the period. Among the victims is a man assassinated by Imbonerakure militiamen in Bukinyana commune in Cibitoke. The police have arrested the alleged killers, but militias of the ruling party enjoy impunity for other crimes and abuses including torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment and illegal arrest.

The same report also refers to arbitrary arrests, among them six (6) men arrested illegally by imbonerakure militiamen. A man was also abducted and reported missing in Cibitoke.

SOS-Torture Burundi also mentions the temporary suspension of a private radio station as well as the permanent withdrawal of the right to broadcast imposed on 3 other media destroyed by state security agents in 2015. These decisions taken by the National Council of the Communication confirm the government's will to gradually muzzle the press in Burundi.

1. Violations of the right to life and physical integrity

- Unidentified individuals tried to assassinate Innocent Sabushimike on Rwibikara Hill, Gisenyi zone, Busoni commune, Kirundo province (north of the country) on 22 September 2017 in the evening. Relatives reported that the victim was stabbed in the chest.

SOS-Torture Burundi notes that the police announced the arrest of four suspects, without revealing neither their identities nor their relationship to the victim.

- On 24 September 2017 in the evening a police agent shot and killed Jean Marie Ngendakuriyo on Ruvumera Hill, Matana commune, Bururi province (southern Sudan). Witnesses reported that the policeman was trying to resume his weapon, which was going to be snatched from him while he was in a fight. The shots also seriously wounded Nadine Sabimbona who was there.

SOS-Torture Burundi notes that the police evoke a case of self-defense.

- On 25 September 2017 Individuals murdered a man whose body was found on Gitaramuka hill, Burambi commune, (southwestern) Rumonge province. Relatives reported that the victim had been missing since the day before.

SOS-Torture Burundi notes that the police have not yet determined the circumstances of his death or any suspects.

- On September 26, 2017 in the evening Célestin Nzobarantumye (64 years) was murdered on Cibitoke Hill, Rugombo Town, Cibitoke Province (northwest). Witnesses report that the victim was killed by neighbors.

SOS-Torture Burundi notes that the police did not apprehend any suspects, despite the presence of numerous witnesses. She evokes accusations of witchcraft as having pushed these inhabitants to kill him. The impunity that characterizes this kind of obscurantist beliefs is likely to cause more victims.

- Unidentified individuals murdered Melchiade Ntahomvukiye whose body was found at his home on the Kajondi hill, Rutovu commune, Bururi province (south of the country) on 27 September 2017. The victim is a fisherman who had just returned the previous day to find his family.

SOS-Torture Burundi notes that the police are looking for the victim's wife as the main suspect.

- Unidentified individuals murdered a man whose body was found on Masasu Hill, Giheta commune, Gitega province (center of the country) on 27 September 2017. The victim and the alleged murderers were not identified that day.



The unidentified victim discovered in Giheta

- Imbonerakure militiamen have murdered Bernard Nzitonda in Rusenda zone, Bukinanyana commune, Cibitoke province (northwest of the country). Relatives reported that the perpetrators used machetes and a gun.

SOS-Torture Burundi notes that the police arrested three members of the ruling party militiamen as suspects: Ndikumana, Mpawenayo and Jonas Nitegeka.

2. Violations of the right to liberty and physical security

- An individual abducted Claude Nzorija in the center of Rugombo commune, Cibitoke province (north-western) on 23 September 2017 in the evening. Witnesses reported identifying the kidnapper as Déo Nsabimana nicknamed Samuel, a member of the ruling party CNDD FDD, who acted while the victim was watching a football match with a group of friends in a public place. Mr. Nzorija was taken on board of a vehicle plate number I 3446 A.

SOS-Torture Burundi notes that relatives have alerted the police, but local police officials have not found the victim. Relatives also report that local imbonerakure militiamen have raised accusations of internal security attacks against Nzorija, which suggests that these militiamen would be behind this despicable act. There is a risk of a forced disappearance of the victim and the fear of a complicity of the police because the alleged kidnapper is free of his movements.

- Imbonerakure militiamen arrested Gaspard Ntawundorera at his home in Rugombo commune, Cibitoke province, on 24 September 2017. Relatives report that he is a pastor of a local church, arrested at the same time as six other faithful of his church.

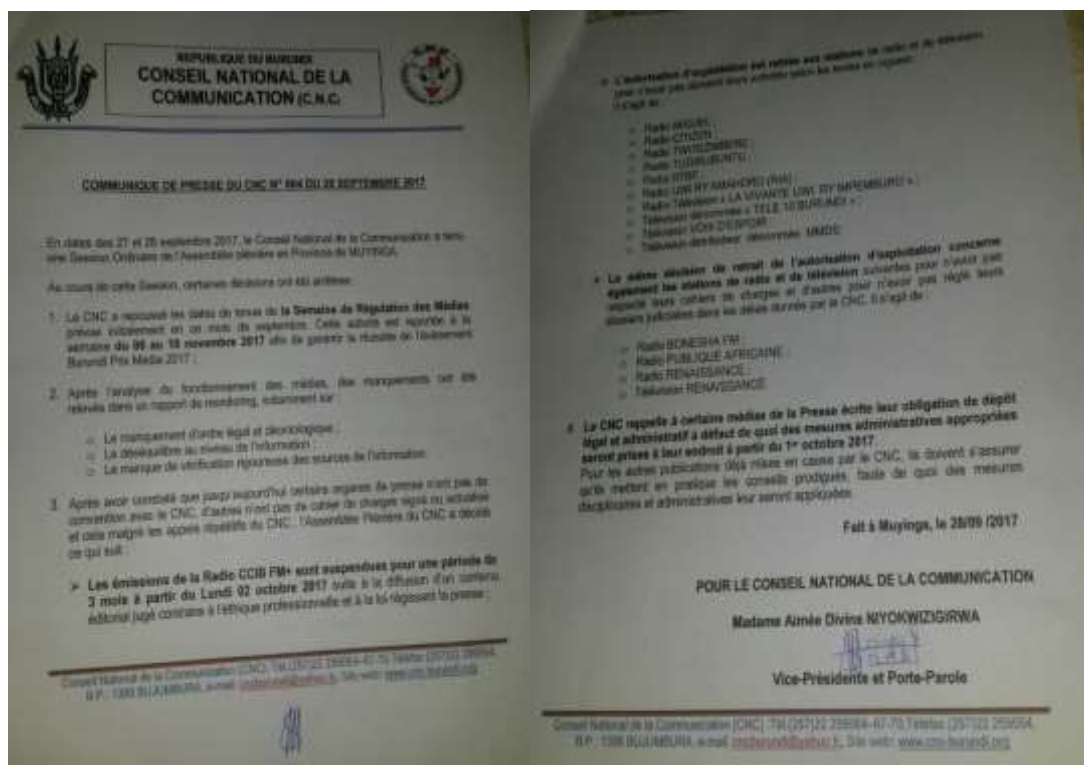
SOS-Torture Burundi notes that this is an illegal and arbitrary arrest because the imbonerakure militiamen are not allowed to carry out arrests. The local police agreed to detain these people without any charges or warrants.

3. The Government of Burundi confirms its willingness to completely silence the press

The Burundian government, through the National Council of Communication (CNC), has decided to suspend a private radio station CCIB FM + belonging to the Burundi Chamber of Commerce in a decision issued on September 28, 2017. This decision is motivated by an editorial content that would not respect the press law of Burundi on the same advice, and will apply for three months.

SOS-Torture Burundi notes that the same decision permanently withdraws the license to operate Bonesha FM and the African Public Radio "RPA" radio stations as well as the Renaissance radio and television station. This leaves no doubt about the muzzling of the press and the freedom of expression that has been under way since the beginning of the crisis in 2015. The closure, destruction of the media premises and the forced exile of many journalists and the very difficult constraints of work of media in Burundi did not suggest any glimmer of hope for respect for press freedom.

The CNC has a role to regulate but also to promote freedom of the press. This body demonstrates that it acts on an injunction of the executive power because it did not allow the reopening of any of the closed media since 2015.



The CNC document suspends a private radio station and permanently closes 4 media destroyed in 2015

The SOS-Torture / Burundi was initiated with the aim of informing national and international opinion on the serious human rights violations under way in Burundi through monitoring reports, in particular 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 military under the pretext of pursuing rebels who came attacking military camps on the outskirts of the Bujumbura capital City. The affected zones are said to be challenging the third term of President Nkurunziza which are Musaga, Mutakura, Cibitoke, Nyakabiga and Jabe, the latter two being located in the center of Bujumbura City Hall