

REPORT NO. 74 OF SOS-TORTURE / BURUNDI PUBLISHED ON 13 MAY 2017

This report of SOS-Torture covers the period from 6 to 13 May 2017 concerning human rights violations in Burundi.

The report mentions new cases of abuses committed by members of the imbonerakure militiamen affiliated to the ruling party CNDD FDD, particularly in Ruyigi province. These include a young woman who was severely tortured by imbonerakure militiamen while tied to a tree. There is also a case of another opposition militant beaten by militias for refusing to disavow his party.

At least twenty-eight (28) persons were arrested during the above-mentioned period and in various localities of the country. These arrests were carried out by police agents, agents of the National Intelligence Service as well as illegal arrests orchestrated by militant's imbonerakure.

1. Violations of the right to life and physical integrity

-Seven members of the Imbonerakure militiamen severely tortured a mother Nadine on the Ruharo hill, Nyabitsinda commune, Ruyigi province, on 7 May 2017. Witnesses reported that the men arrested the young woman, tied and hung on a tree before beating them in turn. The victim was severely affected several times, and her breast swelled greatly as a result of the beatings, unable to move or breastfed her baby. Nadine was evacuated to the Nyaruganda clinic, but relatives of the victim said the clinic officials did not authorize her transfer so as not to disclose the case.

These Imbonerakure militiamen, while torturing the young woman, accused her of wanting to poison her husband, himself a member of the Imbonerakure militiamen. Nadine's relatives report that the husband wanted to chase his wife, and used torture as a stratagem.

SOS-Torture Burundi was able to identify the torturers on the basis of the words of the victim and his relatives. This is her own husband named Muzuka, Dismas Nshimirimana nicknamed 'Mbindigiri', Leonidas Buzoya, Richard, Jaru, Timothee and Sabokwigura.

The police arrested the seven torturers, who were taken to an unknown place of detention for two days. SOS-Torture Burundi, however, learned that they were all released after two days, after paying twenty-Burundi francs each to police agents.

This is not the first time that imbonerakure militiamen have indulged in similar torture with impunity. Another girl known as Nibogora from Ruharo sub-hill, Muhwazi zone, Nyabitsinda commune, Ruyigi province was also tied to a tree and beaten until she lost consciousness on 4 March 2017 (see **SOS-Torture Burundi report No. 65** : [Http://sostortureburundi.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/SOS-Torture-Burundi-ume%CC%81ro-65-en-En.pdf](http://sostortureburundi.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/SOS-Torture-Burundi-ume%CC%81ro-65-en-En.pdf)).

- Individuals tried to burn alive Marcelline Kagaruro on 8 May 2017 after locking her in her house on Gasenyi hill, Busoro zone, Bweru commune in Ruyigi province (East of the country) . Witnesses report that Men of the neighborhood, who accused the victim of practicing sorcery. She was rescued in time, and taken to a police position for her safety.

SOS-Torture Burundi notes, however, that no one has been apprehended for this attempted assassination. Witnesses said they had identified imbonerakure militiamen and members of the ruling party CNDD FDD in the group trying to assassinate Marcelline Kagaruro.

- Imbonerakure militiamen also tortured Terence Ndidiri on Nyabitare hill, Gisuru commune, Ruyigi province, on 6 May 2017. Mr. Ndidiri is a member of the FNL (National Front for Liberation) of Agathon Rwasa. Witnesses reported that the CNDD FDD imbonerakure offered a drink to the victim and ordered him to denigrate his FNL party. Mr. Ndidiri having refused, the imbonerakure militiamen took him out of the bar and went to beat him a few meters with sticks.

Among these torturers, witnesses identified several officials including Jean Fatavyanka, director of the Lycée Nyabitare; Salvator who runs the basic school of Kigamba and three other members of the imbonerakure league.

SOS-Torture Burundi notes that the police did not conduct any investigations or interpellations.

2. Violations of the right to liberty and physical security

- Police agents arrested Réverien Hakizimana on Burenza Hill, Biyorwa zone, Butaganzwa commune in Ruyigi province (eastern DRC) on 6 May 2017. Witnesses reported that after a few hours in the cell of the Biyorwa zone, Hakizimana was

embarked in the official vehicle of the head of the National Intelligence Service of Ruyigi to the capital city of the province.

SOS-Torture Burundi notes that Mr. Hakizimana is a political representative (at the Burenza hill) of the FNL (National Front for the Liberation) party relatives of Agathon Rwasa. The militants and FNL leaders in Ruyigi denounce an arbitrary arrest, politically motivated. FNL militants have told SOS-Torture Burundi that warrants have been issued against other militants of the opposition party and handed over to the Imbonerakure militiamen who know these opponents and have been instructed to arrest them. Some of these frightened opposition members have chosen to hide. To justify these arrests, the police want to accuse Mr. Hakizimana of recruiting combattants to take them to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Tanzania.

- Rugombo Police chief, in the north-western province of Cibitoke, arrested five (5) women on 7 May 2017 in the evening. Witnesses reported that the police agents did not notify the concerned persons of the reasons for their arrests while they were in a bistro. One of the incarcerated women is being held in the prison with her child of only two (2) years, another told us that her child was left alone at home and ill.

SOS-Torture Burundi notes that, to date, the police have not taken any charge against these women, which constitutes arbitrary and abusive arrests.

- Militants from the 'Imbonerakure' league affiliated with to ruling CNDD FDD party arrested Ladislas in Rusengo zone, commune and Ruyigi province (East of the country) on 7 May 2017. Relatives reported that Mr Ladislas, From Kayogoro commune, Makamba province (south of the country) was returning from Tanzania (border to Ruyigi province) where he worked as a laborer.

SOS-Torture Burundi notes that Imbonerakure militiamen, who are not authorized to carry out arrests, accused Mr Ladislas of spying. Police agents in Rusengo zone, however, incarcerated the man in the police cell without any legal documents.

- Cibitoke National intelligence chief (northwestern province) arrested Ferdinand Mbabarempore, a Rwandan man, on Ruce Hill in the Ruziba zone of Mugina commune in Cibitoke province on May 8, 2017. This man was arrested without warrant, according to relatives. Mr. Mbabarempore lives in Burundi where he has been married for a decade to a Burundian woman on Ruce Hill.

The reasons for his arrest were not communicated by the Cibitoke SNR, but the officer in charge of the intelligence service acknowledged the arrest and said that he was in custody for investigation.

SOS-Torture Burundi notes that at the end of this time spent in detention, the SNR must communicate the charges justifying this detention.

He is the third man of Rwandan nationality to be arrested by the head of the SNR of Cibitoke in less than a week. Two other men, Felix Nzarama and Damascene Nkundawayezu, were arrested on 4 May 2017 during their stay in Cibitoke, without communicating their place of detention or the reasons for their arrest (**see SOS-Torture Burundi report No.73**://sostortureburundi.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/SOS-Torture-Burundi-num%C3%A9ro-73-en-FR.pdf).

- Police agents arrested about 20 residents of Nyakabiga zone, Mukaza commune (central Bujumbura) on May 11, 2017 after several searches were carried out in several households. Witnesses indicate that those arrested did not have household records, a document required since the beginning of the crisis, where all the names and identity numbers of the occupants of each household (including domestic workers) must be included.

SOS-Torture Burundi notes again that this document is an attack on the freedom of movement of citizens, a freedom enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of Burundi. Also not governed by any law; fines inflicted on persons not holding this document are left to the discretion of the administration and the local police.

3. Death of a priest due to difficult captivity by armed groups

SOS-Torture Burundi learned of the death of Father Adolphe Ntahondereye, parish priest of Gatumba, Mutimbuzi commune, Bujumbura province, on 10 May 2017. Priest Ntahondereye was kidnapped on 9 April 2017 by an armed group, who were not identified to date.

The priest and three others abducted on the same day testified that they had endured difficult conditions of captivity for several days. After their release, the health of the priest Ntahondereye deteriorated until the day of his death.

To date, no investigation has made it possible to identify the armed groups responsible for these kidnappings as well as other armed attacks in the western and north-western parts of Burundi. These acts have also not been claimed by any group.



Priest Adolphe Ntahondereye, pictured, barefoot, on the day of his release by his captors



Priest Ntahondereye in his parish



SOS – Torture/Burundi

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

The SOS-Torture / Burundi campaign was initiated with the aim of informing national and international opinion on 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 slaughter of a hundred persons killed during the day of 11 and 12 December 2015 by the police and military under the pretext of pursuing rebel groups that came to attack military camps on the outskirts of the Capital City. The affected quarters are said to be challenging the third term of President Nkurunziza which are the following: Musaga, Mutakura, Cibitoke, Nyakabiga and Jabe, the last two being located in the center of Bujumbura.

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