

## **REPORT NO. 77 OF SOS-TORTURE / BURUNDI PUBLISHED ON 3 JUNE 2017**

This report covers the period which is ranging from 27 May to 3 June 2017 about serious human rights violations that continue to be committed with impunity in Burundi.

The report refers to an alarming increase in the paramilitary training of the militiamen Imbonerakure of the ruling party CNDD FDD. Sos-Torture Burundi has collected testimonies about some of the said training sites especially in Cibitoke and Makamba provinces. The purpose of these training is very worrying and there is a risk of mass crimes if really the international community does not intervene under the principle of responsibility to protect.

At least six (6) persons have been murdered in various localities during this period. Among the victims are two (2) activists of the MSD (Movement for Solidarity and Democracy) party, executed after four weeks of illegal detention in a private house.

In the same period, SOS-Torture Burundi was able to list ten (10) arrested persons, including five (5) in Gihosha zone by an officer of the national intelligence service who is involved in numerous crimes. In addition to these arbitrary arrests, the report refers to the forced disappearance of two (2) young members of the Imbonerakure militiamen from the Musaga zone. These disappearances would seek to eliminate the embarrassing actors and witnesses from the crimes committed during the crisis.

### **1. SOS-Torture Burundi notes an alarming increase in the paramilitary training of Imbonerakure militiamen**

Paramilitary training of Imbonerakure militiamen affiliated to the ruling party CNDD FDD is increasingly being reported in different parts of the country.

- In the north-west of the country, SOS-Torture Burundi is informed that paramilitary trainings of militiamen has been organized for two months in the municipalities of province Cibitoke. The sites identified in the course of our research in which these clandestine training are carried out are: Kayange in the Ndava Zone (Buganda commune), Cunyu in Gasenyi zone (Buganda zone), Buganda commune stadium, next to the Ruhagarika Catholic (Buganda commune), Bambo (commune of Murwi), Musenyi (Rugombo commune), Ruziba (Mugina commune), Rubona (Mugina commune), Ruhororo (Mabayi commune), Rutabo (Bukinanyana commune ) and Masango (Bukinanyana commune).

For a few days, however, the imbonerakure have been moved to Mabayi and Bukinyana forests as well as in the Jimbi arboretum Murwi Commune in order to prevent their activities from filtering among the public.

In these training sites, about 1,000 young militiamen are regrouped to follow paramilitary trainings. Testimonies gathered from these young people by SOS-Torture Burundi mention the presence of CNDD FDD demobilized, soldiers and policemen from the former rebellion among the instructors. These coaches explain to the militia that the training is aimed at preparing them to defend the country in the event of attack by rebel groups, according to these instructors, because the military is not reliable.

Among the militiamen trained in Cibitoke, a number of them was deployed in the Democratic Republic of Congo in the Sange groupment on the Kimuka area, in Ndunda and Nyamwoma. Testimonies also reveal that the ambushes on the roads of Gatumba and Gihanga in the west of the country are carried out by the Imbonerakure militiamen already trained and remained in Burundi.

SOS-Torture Burundi has also learned that groups of militiamen in training are controlled by an officer of the National Intelligence Service Joseph Mathias Niyonzima nicknamed Kazungu, who is widely cited in crimes and serious human rights violations including extrajudicial executions, Torture and forced disappearances.

- In the south of the country, SOS-Torture Burundi also received doubtful reports on paramilitary training in the provinces of Makamba and Rutana. The imbonerakure militiamen perform paramilitary exercises every Saturday from 3 am.

During the week of 24-28 April 2017, these Imbonerakure trainings took place in Gatabo zone, Kayogoro commune, Makamba province; While from 8 to 12 May 2016, these trainings took place in Bukeye zone, Kibago commune, Makamba province.

The testimonies of the young militia indicate that the training is operated in groups of 30 to 40 individuals. SOS-Torture Burundi is concerned about the distribution of weapons at the end of these training sessions: according to the same testimonies, each group receives between 5 and 10 firearms.

## **2. Violations of the right to life and physical integrity**

- A young man murdered Elysée Nkurunziza on Mugomere Hill, Rumonge commune and province (south of the country) on May 28, 2017 in the evening. The victim is a student of the locality. Witnesses report that the perpetrator is the brother of a

young girl whom the victim was chatting with. The police apprehended him as the main suspect, but did not confirm the motive behind this assassination.

- Unidentified individuals murdered Virginie Akimana on Muzima hill, Bururi commune and province (south of the country) whose body was found on May 28, 2017 in decay. The body of the victim was found five days after her disappearance from the Munini hill where she lived. The police did not formally identify the perpetrator (s) of this assassination and the motives behind this vile act, but suspects the husband of Mrs. Akimana, Jean Marie Ntahizaniye, apprehended the day after the discovery of his wife's body.

- Unidentified individuals murdered Jean Claude Sayumwe May 28, 2017 on the Kanzaganya hill, Muhuta commune, Rumonge province (south of the country). The police have not yet determined the circumstances of this murder nor possible suspects.

- National intelligence agents executed Rémy Ndagijimana and Léon Bangiricenge on 31 May 2017 in the city of Bujumbura. The two men are opposition activists of the MSD (Movement for Solidarity and Democracy), who were arrested on 3 May 2017 and have been missing since that day.

SOS-Torture Burundi learned from MSD officials that the two men were being held illegally in a private house in Kajaga quarter of Mutimbuzi commune western outskirts of the city of Bujumbura. These political opponents have been subjected to severe torture before their extrajudicial execution on 31 May 2017.

- Unidentified individuals murdered a man and threw his body on Rubuye Hill, Ngozi commune and province on 1 June 2017. The victim's body was not carrying any identification documents and was located near the offices of the National Service Information from Ngozi. SOS-Torture Burundi notes that the local administration has decided to bury the victim without investigations to identify him.

### **3. Violations of the right to liberty and physical security**

- Members of the Imbonerakure militias of the CNDD FDD party have produced hostile songs against opponents of the ruling party and those who refuse to join them on 27 May 2017 in Ruhororo commune, Ngozi province (north of the country) Site of the displaced people of Ruhororo. The site is the domicile of victim's 1993 crisis, following the assassination of Burundian President Melchior Ndadaye.

SOS-Torture Burundi stresses that displaced persons' sites have always been threatened with dismantling by the ruling party (Bugendana and Mutaho from Gitega province, Muruta in Kayanza province, Ruhororo in Ngozi province), who consider them as witnesses Embarrassing crimes committed at the time when the party was still a rebel group. The particularity displaced sites is that they also bring together a large number of Tutsi victims.

The occupants of the Ruhororo site have been particularly repressed since the beginning of the crisis based on the Nkurunziza third term per a big number of arbitrary arrests of displaced persons from the site. Such hostile demonstrations aim to create more fear among Ruhororo displaced people, who fear for their safety.

SOS-Torture Burundi calls on the Special Rapporteur on the situation of internally displaced and stateless persons to take urgent and precautionary measures to protect these survivors of the CNDD FDD during the rebel period.

SOS-Torture Burundi also notes that the Imbonerakure militias wear distinctly the uniform of their political parties, although they officially meet on Saturdays for community work for the entire population.



**Imbonerakure militiamen in front of the displaced singing songs hostile to opponents**



- Cibitoke National intelligence chief (northwestern province) arrested Sosthène Nkundabagabo and Japhet Nsanzabaganwa on Kinga Hill in Mabayi commune on 28 May 2017. Relatives reported that the two men were having Rwanda citizen (A neighboring country to the north and a border of Cibitoke) and have lived in Mabayi for thirty years.

SOS-Torture Burundi notes that this is an arbitrary arrest: the SNR official accuses them of being informants on behalf of the Rwandan army. These are serious charges for which the intelligence officer has not presented evidence, apart from suspicions based on the nationality of the two men. The same officer arrested two other Rwandan nationals visiting Cibitoke on 4 May 2017: Félix Nzarama and Damascène Nkundawayezu (see [SOS-Torture Burundi report No. 73: http://sostortureburundi.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/SOS-Torture-Burundi-num%20ro-73-en-EN.pdf](http://sostortureburundi.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/SOS-Torture-Burundi-num%20ro-73-en-EN.pdf)).

Since the beginning of the crisis, relations between Burundi and Rwanda have been tense following Burundi's accusations of interference against its northern neighbor; including giving asylum to people who allegedly participated in the demonstrations in 2015 and some prosecuted for their alleged involvement in the attempt coup.

- Imbonerakure militiamen illegally arrested Florian Ndayikeka on Nyabibuye Hill in Rango commune, Kayanza province (north of the country) on May 27, 2017. He is a militant of the MSD (Movement for Solidarity and Democracy). Relatives report that the young man has been missing since that day and is likely to be killed.

SOS-Torture Burundi notes that the police did not take any action to find Mr. Ndayikeka or to appeal to the Imbonerakure militias who abducted him.

- Members of the Imbonerakure militiamen beaten Ms Sophie Ntirampeba on Muyange hill, Mubira zone, Butezi commune in Ruyigi province, on May 28, 2017. The militiamen accused the woman of stealing colocas in the fields.

SOS-Torture Burundi notes that the imbonerakure, instead of informing the police for a report, violently tied her arms in the back before torturing her with sticks. Relatives of the victim reported that Ms. Ntirampeba had fainted as a result of the beatings. The same Imbonerakure militiamen demanded the husband of the victim to pay 120,000 Burundi francs as compensation. Not being able to find such an amount, the executioners decided to take a part of the land of the couple.

SOS-Torture Burundi notes that neither the police nor the administration intervened in favor of Mrs. Ntirampeba's family.

- National intelligence agents arrested Jonas Uwimana in the center of Rugombo commune, Cibitoke province (north-western part of the country) on 29 May 2017. Uwimana was taken on board in SNR vehicle plate number D3978A to a place not yet communicated to the family.

SOS-Torture Burundi noted that the SNR agents have no warrant at the time of the arrest. Relatives reported that Mr. Uwimana was going to visit a friend on Mparambo II hill and was reportedly a victim of having participated in demonstrations against the third term of Burundian President Pierre Nkurunziza in April and May 2015. An arbitrary arrest and a violation of the freedoms of movement.

- Agents of the National Intelligence Service arrested Ms Dévotte Niragira, Egede Nahimana, Eric Nshimirimana and Elie Niyongabo in a bar called Open Sky located at number 10 of Kumurinzi Avenue, Gihosha zone, Ntakangwa commune (north of Bujumbura city) On 31 May 2017. The operation was conducted by National intelligence officer Joseph Mathias Niyonzima, who was involved in numerous crimes and serious human rights violations including extrajudicial executions.

Ms. Niragira is the manager of the bar where the SNR and the police claim to have discovered two weapons, because of his arrest with his three employees of the same bar. In addition to these persons, the same officers arrested two neighbors living near the bar: Mr. Agathon Nimpaye (a high school teacher) and Déogratias Nivyabandi (an employee of Regideso).

SOS-Torture Burundi has learned that the land property of the bar belongs to Pascal Ntirampeba, a former staff of the ruling party CNDD FDD forced to exile following his engagement against the third term of President Pierre Nkurunziza. The relatives of the arrested persons said those are rumors, in order to target Mr. Ntirampeba who does not support the power in place.

The SNR must ensure the physical security of Ms. Niragira and her fellow inmates and make public the charges against them.



**Ms Dévotte Niragira, arrested by SNR and police agents**

- Unidentified individuals abducted Aimé Arakaza nicknamed Musaga and Eddy Nduwimana in the Musaga zone (southern city of Bujumbura) on May 25, 2017. Both of these men are members of the Imbonerakure militiamen, cited in crimes targeting other Musaga Youth including complicity in forced disappearances, assassinations and arbitrary arrests. Witnesses report that the two young militiamen are witnesses and actors of numerous crimes, the last of which is the triple murder of other CNDD FDD militiamen in Musaga zone (see **SOS-Torture Burundi report No. 75**: [http: //  
sostortureburundi.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/SOS-Torture-Burundi-  
nume%CC%81ro-75-Fr.pdf](http://sostortureburundi.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/SOS-Torture-Burundi-<br/>nume%CC%81ro-75-Fr.pdf)). SOS-Torture Burundi is concerned about these disappearances, which raise fears of an attempt to eliminate embarrassing witnesses and actors of serious crimes committed since the beginning of the crisis.



Aimé Arakaza nicknamed Musaga, one of the missing imbonerakure militia

#### 4. Ngozi Tribunal orders the release of opponents, victims of arbitrary arrests

SOS-Torture Burundi has learned of the release of eight militants of the FNL (National Front for the Liberation) party loyal to Agathon Rwaswa, currently deputy president of the Burundian National Assembly. The release order was issued by the Intermediate Court of Ngozi (north of the country) on May 29, 2017, the declarants not guilty of the charges against the security of the State against the public prosecution.

Although their detention was arbitrary and their release was a salutary act, SOS-Torture Burundi noted that Ngozi court's order was delayed more than three months after the arrest of these eight (8) political opponents. Nicodemus Kameya, Norbert Ciza, Benjamin Hitimana, Salvator Ndikumana, Francois Bukuru, Emile Mutabazi, Pascal Girabo and Albert Ngendahayo were arrested on 19 February 2017 in a bar in Ngozi (see report **SOS-Torture Burundi N ° 63**: <http://sostortureburundi.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/sos-Torture-Burundi-numero-63-en-En.pdf>).

The Ngozi Tribunal sentenced them to pay a fine for organizing an illegal meeting, a decision that is not based on any tangible evidence.





## 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 a 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 which came to attack military camps on the outskirts of the capital city. The affected quarters are said to be challengers the third term of President Nkurunziza which are Musaga, Mutakura, Cibitoke, Nyakabiga and Jabe, the last two being located in the center of Bujumbura.*

SOS-TORTURE