

REPORT No. 113 OF SOS-TORTURE / BURUNDI PUBLISHED ON FEBRUARY 10, 2018

This report of SOS-Torture covers the period from 3 to 10 February 2018 concerning cases of violations and human rights violations in Burundi.

At least twenty-four (24) cases of arbitrary arrests are recorded during the period in different locations. Among these cases is a young man arrested in Musaga and charged with illegal carrying of weapons, although the police found nothing at his home. Another student was detained without a warrant in three different cells and charged with participation in a rebel group.

Victims of ongoing crackdown to impose a constitutional change are also enumerated. Officials are also forced to contribute doubly to the elections: their salaries are cut by public service managers, but they are also forced to contribute to the provinces by the local authorities.

The report also mentions new cases of abuse by members of the imbonerakure militiamen including the aggression of the governor of Rutana province. Among other cases, the forced disappearance of a member of the FNL opposition party orchestrated by Imbonerakure militiamen in Kirundo Province.

1. Violations of the right to life and to physical integrity

- Members of the Imbonerakure militiamen tortured Jonathan Nzobonimpa on Buhayira hill, Murwi commune, Cibitoke province, north-west of the country, on February 6, 2018. Relatives report that Nzobonimpa is an activist of the opposition FNL opposition party members of Agathon Rwaso. He was ambushed and beaten until becoming unconscious.

Sos-Torture Burundi notes a new case of unjustified violence by militiamen members of the ruling CNDD FDD party, who accuse opposition members of raising awareness of the "no" vote in the constitutional referendum organized by the Burundian government. The police did not arrest the alleged torturers.

- Members of the Imbonerakure militiamen tortured a man on Nyamigina hill, Kabanga zone, Kinyinya commune, Ruyigi province (eastern part of the country) on 6 February 2018 in the evening. Witnesses who could not identify the victim report that the militiamen, led by the hill chief Pierre Nzigo, intercepted the man who was returning home and beat him.

Sos-Torture Burundi notes that afterwards, the victim of torture was taken to the police cell in the Kabanga zone for incarceration. He was released early the next morning in a critical state of health, and his belongings were stolen from him by members of the imbonerakure militiamen. The police complied with the violence of

the militiamen against the victim, incarcerating the victim and leaving his torturers free.

- Members of the Imbonerakure militiamen abducted Jean Pierre Mushengeze from his home on Carurambo Hill, Ntega commune, Kirundo province, in the north of the country, on 6 February 2018. Eyewitnesses report that the kidnappers were sent by Ntega commune ruling party leader, Jean Marie Mugumyankiko; as well as the head of the imbonerakure militiamen of the same municipality, Alphonse Ntereke. Relatives also report that the victim is a member of the opposition FNL party, whom they accused of conducting an awareness campaign for the vote of the "no" during constitutional referendum next May.

Sos-Torture Burundi notes the violence used by the imbonerakure militiamen who beat up the victim before taking him to an unknown destination. Since then, Mr. Mushengeze has been missing. There is fear of execution of the victim, whose relatives have found a simple shirt near the Kanyaru River separating Burundi and Rwanda. The police must warrant the abductors to find the kidnapped victim and bring them to justice.

- Unidentified individuals attacked Jonas Hakizimana's home on Munini Hill,

Bururi commune and province (south of the country) on 7 February 2018 in the evening. Relatives report that the occupants of the house were not affected.

Sos-Torture Burundi notes that the police have not identified any suspects to date. The target victim is a cadre of the Economic Community of Great Lakes Countries (CEPGL) grouping together Burundi, Rwanda and the DRC.

- Unidentified individuals attempted to murder Frédéric Ndayisaba with a grenade on Kavomo hill, Kirundo commune and province (north of the country) on 7 February 2018 in the evening. Relatives report that the victim, who is also an administrative officer in the zone, suffered leg injuries.

Sos-Torture Burundi notes the arrest of three activists of FNL opposition party a few hours after this attack (see point 2 of this rep).

2. Violations of the right to liberty and physical security

- Young members of the imbonerakure militiamen assaulted Bede Nyandwi, governor of Rutana province (south-east of the country) and his driver on Gitaba hill on February 3, 2018. The governor is the highest administrative authority in the province and he is appointed by the President. Witnesses report that the procession of Rutana's governor



SOS – Torture/Burundi

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

was intercepted by a group of militiamen from the ruling party CNDD FDD , which ensured the safety of the other party members in a meeting.

Sos-Torture Burundi notes that the imbonerakure militiamen are increasingly aggressive and sometimes violent, following the impunity and complicity they have often enjoyed. They stripped the provincial governor and his driver of their mobile phones after an illegal roadway blocking. No action has been taken on this aggression to date. Sos-Torture Burundi also notes that the governor of Rutana is a member of the opposition party FNL faithful to Agathon Rwasa.

- Police agents arrested at least 15 people in Makamba commune between 3 and 4 February 2018. Witnesses report that these people were preparing to take a bus that was to transport them to Cibitoke province (North West of the country) for agricultural work.

Sos-Torture Burundi notes that these people are accused of participating in armed movements. The police, however, did not provide evidence for these charges.

- The communal director of education in Rutana province (south-east of the country) threatened the teachers in a meeting on January 31, 2018. Witnesses report that he ordered the levy of an amount varying from 3.000 to 10.000 francs on their wages according to the degree of step (from the teachers to the directors of the schools). These amounts would go to the 2020 election, in addition to another amount deducted at source by public service managers.

Sos-Torture Burundi notes the forced nature of the amount taken, without guarantees of control of funds collected by the Burundian government. There is also another parallel levy by various authorities at different levels of responsibility, and by the same government and private sector agents. These unilateral decisions to levy on the salaries of civil servants add up to constant threats against anyone considering voting against the proposed revision of the Constitution in May 2018.

- Police agents arrested Teddy Ngirimana in the Musaga zone, Muha commune (south of Bujumbura city) on February 4, 2018. Relatives report that the young man was arrested without a warrant at his home, after a search that allows any seizure.

Sos-Torture Burundi notes that the young man was subsequently sent to the cell of the national intelligence service. He is accused of possessing a gun, although police agents have found any weapon during seizures at his home.

- The governor of Ruyigi province (East of the country) has banned the journalist Jean Claude Nshimirimana to practice in his province since February 7, 2018. The journalist

practices as correspondent in the Isanganiro radio in the region, one of the independent radios attacked after a failed coup attempt in May 2015 and re-authorized to open in 2016.

Sos-Torture Burundi notes that this censorship is linked to the journalist's work, which referred to the forced contributions made to Ruyigi officials by the provincial election authority, in addition to the contributions already levied on their salaries by the managers of the function public. Governor Abdallah Hassan accuses the journalist of disturbing public order. This is a violation of the freedom of the press. These threats and intimidations also underline the illegal nature of these samples, which were mentioned in the journalist's reports.



Jean Claude Nshimirimana, reporter of Isanganiro radio in the eastern region of Burundi

- The police chief of Buganda commune, Cibitoke province (north-west of the country) arrested two young men on 5 February 2018 in the evening. Witnesses report that the two young men were mistreated, tied up and thrown into the back of the police officer's vehicle in Buganda.

Sos-Torture Burundi notes that the police did not formally communicate these arrests or the identity of those arrested. Other police agents again embarked the two young men from the police cell, without their new place of detention also being communicated. There is a risk of forced disappearance and execution of the two young men. The police must communicate their identity and their place of detention.

- Police agents arrested Leonidas Barantandikiye on Jimbi Hill, Kibago Commune, Makamba Province, south of the country, on February 5, 2017. Relatives report that Mr.

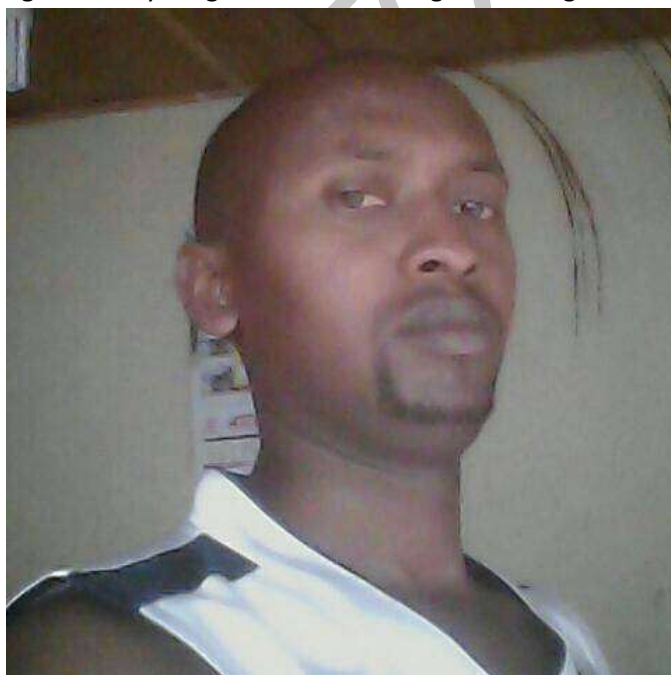
Barantandikiye is a breeder who was trying to recover one of his confiscated cows then that she grazed in the fields belonging to the communal high school of Kibago.

Sos-Torture Burundi notes that the police did not report any charges against Mr. Barantandikiye.

- Soldiers arrested Philbert Nginganza and his friend on Mukara Hill, Nyagasasa zone, Mugamba commune, Bururi province, southern of the country, on 6 February 2018. Witnesses report that the two young men are students in Bujumbura, who returned to their home after periods of university sessions.

Sos-Torture Burundi notes that the two students were arrested after members of the imbonerakure militiamen reported their presence to soldiers and then detained in the Mugamba police cell. Members of the imbonerakure militiamen told the military that the two students are rebels from a group based in Rwanda. Bururi's army, police or prosecutor's office gave no explanation for these arrests, which were carried out without warrants.

Sos-Torture Burundi also learned of the transfer of Philbert Nginganza the next day to the army headquarters in Bujumbura. Mr. Nginganza was again transferred on the same day (7 February 2018) to the National Intelligence Service. To date, no charge has been made against the young student who has gone through three and different cells services.



Student Philbert Nginganza, Arrested by the Army and Detained in Police Cells, Army Staff and SNR

- Police agents arrested Stany Nyabenda, Cyprien Ciza and Luc Sendegeya on Kavomo hill, Kirundo commune and province (north of the country) on 8 February 2018 at night.



Relatives report that the three men are members of the FNL opposition party of the deputy Agathon Rwasa. They were arrested a few hours after an attempt assassination against Kirundo zone leader (CNDD FDD ruling party member).

Sos-Torture Burundi notes that they are accused of not rescuing the zone chief after he was wounded in this attack. Police must release these men, victims of arbitrary arrest and detention.

SOS-Torture / Burundi was initiated with the objective of informing national and international opinion about 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 slaughter of a hundred people killed during the day of December 11 and 12, 2015 by the police and soldiers on the pretext of pursuing rebels who came to attack military camps on the outskirts of the capital city.

The affected zones are said to be contesting President Nkurunziza's third mandate namely Musaga, Mutakura, Cibitoke, Nyakabiga, Jabe, the last two being located in the center of Bujumbura City Hall.

SOS-