

## **SOS-TORTURE / BURUNDI REPORT No. 127 PUBLISHED ON 19 MAY 2018**

This report of SOS-Torture covers the period between 12 and 19 May 2018 concerning cases human rights violations in Burundi.

Almost (4) persons were murdered during the period. Among the victims an activist of the opposition Amizero y'Abarundi coalition murdered by members of the imbonerakure militiamen in Kirundo. This election period was marked by numerous acts of violence committed by militiamen members of the ruling party, including acts of torture. The victims are sympathizers of the opposition.

Members of imbonerakure militiamen are also involved in a dozen cases of arbitrary, illegal and irregular arrests. In each of the cases listed, local police agents are complicit in the actions of militiamen of CNDD FDD party. At least thirteen (13) christians of a church were also arrested by the communal administrator of Nyanza-lake, for refusing to vote following their religious beliefs.

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

- Unidentified individuals assassinated a boy whose body was discovered near Kanyinya parish, Kirundo commune and province (north of the country) on May 13, 2018. Witnesses report that the victim had a rope around his neck that would have served to strangle him.

Sos-Torture Burundi notes that the identity of the young boy (about 14 years) is not yet known, nor the alleged perpetrators of his assassination.

- Members of imbonerakure militiamen ambushed Amizero y'Abarundi opposition coalition activists who were returning from an election campaign on Kigari hill, Ntega commune, Kirundo province ( north of the country) on 13 May 2018. Witnesses report that clashes erupted and a man known as Raphael Barengwanabi was shot dead. The murdered victim is one of the members of the opposition coalition, and twelve (12) others were injured, including a member of imbonerakure militiamen who was seriously injured.

Sos-Torture Burundi says that the police announced the arrest of six (6) persons: four (4) members of the Amizero y'Abarundi coalition and two (2) members of Imbonerakure militiamen. Police agents did not indicate the identities of those arrested, nor specify whether they are alleged perpetrators of the ambush that caused the death of a man.

- Unidentified individuals assassinated Salvator Simbarimbere on Kavomo Hill, Kirundo commune and province (north of the country) on May 13, 2018 in the evening. Witnesses report that the attackers threw a grenade via the window of the victim's room. Mr. Simbarimbere died on the spot, and his wife was seriously injured.

SOS-Torture Burundi notes that the police have not yet identified any suspects, nor determined the reasons for this crime.

- Members of the Imbonerakure militiamen trespassed the homes of several members of Amizero y'Abarundi Coalition on Buhindo Hill, Murwi Commune, Cibitoke Province (in the northwest of the country) in the evening of May 13, 2018. Witnesses report that militiamen were led by Buhindo zone chief Albert Barusasiyeko. Militiamen arrested and tortured Alexis Ndayishimiye, Berchimas Nduwimana and Eric Bayubahe.

Sos-Torture Burundi notes the violence of the attack, and the involvement of an administrative authority identified by several witnesses. The zone chief requested militiamen to show to opposition activists "what they learned in paramilitary trainings". The witnesses also report that the imbonerakure militiamen beaten up the victims by telling them to "kill and bury" people who do not want to vote for "yes" in the referendum. The police did neither arrest the aggressors nor the Buhindo zone chief, who was identified by the victims and their relatives.

- Members of the Imbonerakure militiamen violently beat Uziel Ndagijimana on Kagazi Hill, Rugombo commune, Cibitoke province (north-west of the country) on 14 May 2018. Witnesses report that Mr. Ndagijimana was intercepted while walking near the office of CNDD FDD. The young militiamen attacked him for wearing a tea shirt of the opposition coalition Amizero y'Abarundi calling for a "no" vote in the referendum. The victim was brought inside and tortured by imbonerakure militiamen. Relatives report

that they also tore his t-shirt, threatening to kill him "like the others" if he wears it again.

Sos-Torture Burundi notes violent aggressions carried out by imbonerakure militiamen, leaving the victim dying. Death threats are also signs of political intolerance and constant terror by members of the ruling party. Sos-Torture Burundi notes that the police did not open any investigation following this attack.

- Individuals murdered Rosette Nahimana 75years on Kirambi hill, Ruyigi province, eastern Burundi on 15, 2018. Witnesses report that the victim was attacked by members of the local imbonerakure militiamen.

Sos-Torture Burundi notes that the police arrested two suspects: Barthélémy Ndorimana and Kadende.

- Members of imbonerakure militiamen seriously injured Rénovat Simbananiye (57years) on Ndago hill, Nyange zone, Makamba commune and province (south of the country) on May 17, 2018. Militiamen arrested him and wounded his face, accusing him of campaigning for the rejection of the new constitution submitted to referendum on May 17, 2018.

SOS-Torture Burundi notes that the victim has lodged a complaint with the police, but the security forces have not arrested any of Mr. Simbananiye's attackers who have been identified.

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

- Members of imbonerakure militiamen arrested Nduwi and Ntunzwe on Ngonya, Minago zone, Rumonge commune and province (south-west of the country) in the evening of May 12, 2018. Relatives report that the two men are militants of FNL (National Front for the Liberation) opposition party faithful to MP Agathon Rwasa. Members of the imbonerakure militiamen tortured both victims before taking them to Rumonge Police Station.

Sos-Torture Burundi notes the violence of members of imbonerakure militiamen towards opposition activists. It is also necessary to note the illegal nature of the arrests of the two men by civilians who have no rights in this matter. The police forces are also complicit in the actions of imbonerakure

militiamen by agreeing to put persons in jail without any charge against them and in flagrant violation of the procedure. .

- Members of Imbonerakure militiamen also arrested three (3) other FNL party militants in Buyengero commune, Rumonge province (south-west of the country) on May 12, 2018. Relatives report that these three persons were caught while they had fled their homes following the persecution of the militiamen during the referendum campaign.

Sos-Torture Burundi notes an illegal arrest by militiamen members of the ruling party. Six (6) other FNL militants managed to escape these arrests, and forced to flee their homes. Police agents in Buyengero are complicit in the acts of the militiamen because they agreed to put in jail the three men without legal reason.

- Members of Imbonerakure militiamen arrested Nestor Hakizimana and Joseph Bikorimana on Samwe Hill, Rugombo commune, Cibitoke province (northwest of the country) on 11 May 2018. Eyewitnesses report that the two men are Amizero y'Abarundi coalition activists (coalition of FNL and Uprona non-governmental parties), victims of their support for the "no" campaign for the referendum.

Sos-Torture Burundi notes an illegal arrest and complicity of police agents in front of abuses of Imbonerakure militiamen. Messrs. Hakizimana and Bikorimana are being held in Rugombo police cell without any reason.

- Members of Imbonerakure militiamen arrested Gaspard Kabura and Nicaise Habineza on Kibago Hill, Kibago Commune, Makamba Province (South of the country) in the evening of 12 May 2018 . Relatives report that the two men got out after being awakened by the sound of militiamen in night patrol. Militiamen arrested and beaten them, accusing them of doing the referendum campaign for the "no" during the night.

Sos-Torture Burundi notes that the victims were transported by militiamen group to Kibago police cell, despite their precarious state of health due to beatings. Police agents arrested and incarcerated both victims without reason and in violation of legal procedure. Messrs. Kabura and Habineza are retirees of the Burundian army (from the former FAB Burundian Armed Forces).

- Members of the Imbonerakure militiamen violated Mr. Baretegusa's home on Kirinzi hill, Mugina commune, Cibitoke province, north-west of the country,

on May 13, 2018. Witnesses report that militiamen were armed with clubs and wanted to stop this man, accusing him of holding a meeting in his area to call the population to vote against the Constitution revision.

Sos-Torture Burundi notes that Mr. Baretegusa managed to flee the group of militiamen, after people from the quarter warned him of the threat. This man, a member of the opposition coalition Amizero y'Abarundi, had to hide to escape reprisals. The police must ensure security against threats from members of imbonerakure militiamen.



### **Mr. Baretegusa, opposition activist forced to flee his home following threats of imbonerakure**

- Bururi Commune Administrator Arrested Elvis and Richard on Nyabigega Hill, Muzenga Zone, Bururi Commune and Province (South of the Country) on May 17, 2018. Witnesses Report that Both Men, Members of Amizero y'Abarund Opposition Coalition, were arrested while traveling by vehicle. The communal administrator of Bururi Nestor Nijimbere accuses them of having continued the referendum campaign the day of the vote.

Sos-Torture Burundi notes that the two men are being held in Bururi police cell without a record. They are victims of arbitrary arrests and detention.

- Police agents arrested thirteen (13) christian of FECABU church on Kiderege hill, Nyanza-lac commune, Makamba province (south of the country) on May 17, 2018. Relatives report that the order to arrest them was given by the Nyanza-

Lac head of police station, accusing them of not voting on the day of the referendum.

Sos-Torture Burundi notes that among those arrested are eight (8) women and five (5) men. The head of police station released the women, but kept the men in detention. Relatives report that this group of people did not vote because it is contrary to their religious beliefs. These arrests constitute a violation of the fundamental freedoms provided by the Constitution of the Republic of Burundi and especially Article 22 which provides: "All citizens are equal before the law, which guarantees them equal protection. No one may be discriminated against because of his or her origin, race, ethnicity, sex, color, language, his social situation, his religious convictions, philosophical or political or because of a physical disability or mental health or being a carrier of HIV / AIDS or any other incurable disease."



## SOS – Torture/Burundi

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

SOS-Torture/Burundi was initiated with the objective of informing national and international opinion about 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 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.

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