

SOS-TORTURE / BURUNDI REPORT No. 128 PUBLISHED ON MAY 26, 2018

This report of SOS-Torture covers the period between 19 and 26 May 2018 on cases of human rights violations in Burundi.

Almost eight (8) persons were murdered during the period in different localities. Among the victims three (3) men were executed in Kibira forest. They were found tied up and their bodies rotting. A police agent was also shot dead by his superior, an officer in charge of the police border in Bubanza. The victim had, however, warned the office of his area of the death threats against him.

Arbitrary arrests and detentions: at least seven (7) cases are identified in this report, including three (3) illegally committed by members of imbonerakure militiamen. One case of forced disappearance is also reported in Rutana province during this week.

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

- A police agent named Mazuru threatens to execute Philibert Minani, the leader of the opposition coalition Amizero y'Abarundi on Mureba hill, Nyabitsinda commune, Ruyigi province (East of the country) since May 19, 2018. Relatives report that the policeman is on leave, and armed with a rifle to track down Mr. Minani. He threatens to execute him following the results of the referendum vote where the "no" dominated among the voters in this area.

Sos-Torture Burundi notes serious threats made by a policeagents. Mr. Minani is forced to live in hiding for fear of his safety. Nyabitsinda Police Department must ensure Mr. Minani's safety and bring to justice this police agent who uses a service weapon to disrupt public order and safety.

- An unidentified individual attempted to assassinate a priest Ildephonse Sabokwigina on Mbogora hill, Nyabihanga commune, Mwaro province (center of the country) in the evening May 19, 2018. Witnesses report that this individual entered the residence of the priests of the parish, and fired on the priest three times before fleeing. Priest Sabokwigina was rushed to hospital for treatment.

SOS-Torture Burundi notes that the police have not identified the suspect so far, nor determine the motive behind this attempt assassination.



Priest Ildephonse Sabokwigina, seriously wounded by bullets in his parish

- Unidentified individuals murdered Pierre Bangirinama with machetes on Nyamakarabo hill, Mugina commune, Cibitoke province (north-west of the country) in the evening of 19 May 2018. Relatives report that this man had been threatened by leaflets for several days, and informed it to the local police.

Sos-Torture Burundi notes a planned execution following threats to the victim, the complicit silence and the inaction of the security forces to protect Mr. Bangirinama. Relatives of the victim also accuse young members of the imbonerakure militiamen of being the source of threats and execution. The police have not identified any suspects to date.

- A police officer shot dead his agent (guard) named Solomon in Kanyosha zone, Muha commune (south of Bujumbura town) in the evening of May 19, 2018. Witnesses report that the killing officer is the chief of the Air and Border Police station in Bubanza (west of the country) and resides in Bujumbura. Relatives of the victim also report that Solomon had warned

Bubanza Police Commissioner of the risks to his safety and denounced his superior.

Sos-Torture Burundi notes that Bubanza Police Station did not respond to the victim's warnings. The Police agents Salomon had decided to take refuge at the officer's neighbor's house, where he was a guard, but the officer chased him down to the neighbors' house to shoot him. This officer was arrested and tried following the flagrante proceedings and sentenced on 21 May 2018 to ten (10) years in prison.

- Unidentified armed individuals shot and killed Joseph Kanjori on Donge-Burasira Hill, Mugamba Commune, Bururi Province(south of the country), on 23 May 2018 in the evening. Witnesses report that an armed group attacked a bistro where the victim was, and robbed the clients before killing Mr. Kanjori.

Sos-Torture Burundi notes that the police have not yet identified any suspects, nor determine the motive behind this assassination. Relatives report that Mr. Kanjori was a catechist of Mugamba Parish.

- Unidentified individuals abducted Anicet Bazira on Muzye Hill, Giharo Commune, Rutana Province (Southeast) on May 23, 2018. Relatives report that Mr. Bazira was going to church at the time of his abduction.

Sos-Torture Burundi also learned that the victim is an active member of the opposition party FNL and that he was one of the political representatives appointed by this party to observe the conduct of the vote in his area in the May 17, 2018 referendum . There is a fear that this forced disappearance may be related to the victim's political activities.

- Unidentified individuals murdered Joseph Niyokwizera (65 years), whose body was discovered in Nyamitanga sector at the cross road II, Ndava zone, Buganda commune, Cibitoke province (north-west of the country) on the morning of May 24, 2018. Relatives report that Mr. Niyokwizera was last seen alive the night before with other friends.

Sos-Torture Burundi notes that the police have not yet identified any suspects, nor determine the motives behind this assassination.

- Unidentified individuals executed three (3) men whose bodies were found in Kibira Forest on Kibande Sub-Hill, Butahana Zone, Mabayi Commune, Cibitoke Province (North West) on May 24, 2018. Witnesses report that the victims were tied up and their bodies rotting.

Sos-Torture Burundi notes that the victims have not been identified, which raises fears of a triple execution of people who do not live in the locality but have been displaced in the forest from another locality. The advanced decomposition of the bodies does not yet make it possible to determine when the executions date back. Witnesses also report their concerns following the presence of some Kinyarwanda-speaking individuals and traveling alongside members of the imbonerakure militiamen during their night patrols. The police have not identified the victims to date, nor the circumstances of their executions.

- Individuals murdered Nicodeme Nyandwi (55 years) on Rushimabarimyi Hill, Mugina commune, Cibitoke province (north-west) on 24 May 2018 in the evening.

Sos-Torture Burundi notes that the police announced the arrest of three (3) suspects: the wife of the victim Venancie Barakamfitye, and two (2) other men. Relatives report that these two men received from the wife a sum of 100,000 francs to kill the husband, following the bad relations between the couple. Witnesses also report that the two alleged killers are members of the local imbonerakure militiamen.

2. Violations of the right to liberty and physical security

- Members of the Imbonerakure militiamen beat Samuel Ndarurereye and a person accompanying him to Kinyinya commune, Ruyigi province (East of the country) on May 16, 2018. Witnesses report that he is the MP's driver. Pascal Bizumuremyi, an elected member of the opposition coalition Amizero y'Abarundi in Ruyigi. The two victims brought the credentials of their political representatives for the referendum vote scheduled for the following day (May 17, 2018).

Sos-Torture Burundi notes the violence of members ruling party CNDD FDD towards opposition activists. They also confiscated letters of accreditation for

the political representatives of their coalition and handed them three days after the vote. The police did not conduct any investigation to identify the perpetrators.

- Members of the Imbonerakure militiamen arrested Jacques Ndikumana, Mpanganze and Protais Ndayambaje in Bukinanyana commune, Cibitoke province (north-west of the country) on 17 May 2018. Witnesses report that the group of young militiamen was armed with clubs, and threatened the three men to execute them. Militiamen accused those arrested of attempting to disrupt security on the day of the referendum election (May 17).

Sos-Torture Burundi notes an illegal arrest and an improper and arbitrary detention of these three persons in Bukinanyana police cell. It should also be noted the complicity of local police officers who agreed to put these three men in jail without any real charges justifying incarceration. Relatives report that those arrested are all active militants of the Amizero y'Abarundi coalition who called to vote against the proposed revision of the Constitution.

- Police agents arrested Albert and his father in the Magara zone, Bugarama commune, Rumonge province (south-west of the country) on May 22, 2018. Witnesses report that the arrest was ordered by youth i militiamen mbonerakure of the locality, who had just identified the two men as members of the opposition coalition Amizero y'Abarundi.

Sos-Torture Burundi notes an arbitrary arrest and detention of these two men in Magara police station. No crime ustifies these arrests. Magara police are complicit with the imbonerakure militiamen in the crackdown on opposition supporters.

- Police agents arrested Mélance Ngenzebuhoro and Léonidas Sabokwigura in Itaba commune, Gitega province (center of the country) on 24 May 2018. Relatives report that the first was arrested at his home, and Mr. Sabokwigura at his v place.

Sos-Torture Burundi also learned that the two men are political leaders members of the opposition coalition Amizero y'Abarundi: Ngenzebuhoro is a member of the youth committee of the FNL faithful to Agathon Rwaswa, and Mr. Sabokwigura is the representative of UPRONA party of this same coalition. The two opponents are accused of having organized an unauthorized meeting.



The SOS-Torture / Burundi campaign was initiated with the aim of informing national and international opinion about the serious human rights violations under way in Burundi through monitoring reports, particularly on torture and arrests arbitrary, 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 term namely Musaga, Mutakura, Cibitoke, Nyakabiga, Jabe, the last two being located in the center of Bujumbura City Hall.

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