

SOS-TORTURE/BURUNDI REPORT No. 136 PUBLISHED ON 21 JULY 2018

This SOS-Torture/Burundi report covers the period between 14 and 21 July 2018 concerning cases of human rights violations and abuses in Burundi. One person was found murdered in Nyakabiga, Bujumbura town, and another victim has been disappeared since his arrest by an intelligence officer of Kirundo province, fearing that he has been executed.

At least eight (8) persons were victims of torture and assault during the period. The perpetrators are agents of intelligence service, as well as members of imbonerakure militia.

The report also mentions six (6) cases of arbitrary arrests, including one by members of imbonerakure militia.

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

- National Intelligence Service agents tortured Leonard Niyonkuru (a student) throughout his period in police custody until he was transferred to Mpimba Central Prison (Bujumbura City). Relatives report that the victim was very weak with signs of torture when he arrived at the prison on July 12, 2018.

Sos-Torture/Burundi notes the precarious state of health of Mr. Niyonkuru after the torture he suffered. The National intelligence agents also hide the victim's place of detention, which his relatives searched in vain in all possible detention cells for nearly two weeks. Mr. Niyonkuru is accused of insulting institutions and collaborating with the Rwandan intelligence service. Any confession extracted under torture cannot be taken into consideration in this case.

- On July 15, 2018 member of Imbonerakure militiamen violently beat up Elias Kavamahanga in Gasanda quarter, Ruyigi commune, in the east of the country. Witnesses report that his attackers accused Mr. Kavamahanga, a man named Déo who is also Gasanda hill elected, to be a thief before wounding him by beatings.

Sos-Torture/Burundi notes violence of aggression of which the author is a public servant at the local level and member of militiamen of CNDD-FDD party in power; as well as the precarious state of health of the victim who was evacuated dying at hospital. Ruyigi police have not yet arrested the perpetrator.

- Unidentified individuals murdered Gelase Nzeyimana whose body was found in a bush near Nyakabiga Avenue, Mukaza commune (Bujumbura city center) on 16 July 2018. Witnesses report that the victim (born on Gitanga hill, Gisagara commune, Cankuzo province in the east of the country) bore traces of injurie on his head.

SOS-Torture/Burundi notes that the police have not yet identified any suspects of the assassination.



Mr. Nzeyimana's body found in a bush in Nyakabiga

- Sos-Torture/Burundi learned about the disappearance of Michel Nduwayo on July 15, 2018, while he was detained in the office of the head of Kirundo province intelligence service (north of the country). Witnesses report that police agents for alleged involvement in assassinations arrested Mr. Nduwayo the same day.

Sos-Torture/Burundi notes the arrest of Kirundo's intelligence officer in Bujumbura, where his superiors summoned him. Mr. Nduwayo remains missing till today. There is a strong fear that the victim has been executed.

- Sos-Torture/Burundi learned of the discovery of several human bones on Buheka Hill, Nyanza Lake Commune, Makamba Province (South of the country) on July 18, 2018. Witnesses report that it is a common grave dating from several years.

SOS-Torture/Burundi notes the intention of administrative officials to protect the mass grave, in waiting the investigation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.



Views of human remains discovered at Nyanza Lac

2. Violations of the right to liberty and physical security

- Members of Imbonerakure militiamen arrested Masharubu on Gatwe Hill, Bigina Zone, Kayogoro Commune, Makamba Province (South) in the evening of July 15, 2018. Witnesses report that the order to arrest Mr. Masharubu was given by the Bigina zone chief named Paul Rwajekera, and executed by militiamen Thomas and Manebari.

Sos-Torture/Burundi notes an unlawful and arbitrary arrest, as well as the complicity of the local police who imprisoned the victim without any warrant and without any motive. Relatives report that Mr. Masharabu is an activist of the opposition FNL party (National Front for the Liberation) faithful to Agathon Rwaswa, and that he is the victim of his political convictions.

- On July 18, 2018 police agents arrested Abdallah Nzovugankize, Juma Macumi and Abibu Simbayobewe on Sigu Hill, Nyagisozi Zone, Busoni Commune, Kirundo Province, North of the country. Relatives report that the three men are active members of the opposition party FNL of the faithful of Agathon Rwaswa MP from the Nyagisozi zone. Witnesses also report that they were apprehended after being beaten by a group of local imbonerakure militiamen, who accused them of calling to a "no" vote during the constitutional referendum of May 2018.

Sos-Torture/Burundi notes an arrest and arbitrary detention of these opposition members, as well as the violence of the ruling party's militiamen who remain free from their movements despite the beating. Witnesses identified some of the aggressors among imbonerakure militiamen: Juvenal Ndorere (Nyagisozi zone chief), Thomas Bukuru (head of the Sigu health center), Rashidi (director of the Sigu basic School) and Minani. None of them were arrested or interrogated by the police.

- Members of Imbonerakure militiamen beat Japhet Ryezimana, Déo Nsengimana and Josiane Bararunyeretse on Kivoga Hill, Kiremba commune, Ngozi province, (north of the country) on 19 July 2018 in the evening. Relatives reported that the victims are members of the opposition party FNL faithful to MP Agathon Rwaswa. The first victim is accused by militiamen of having voted for "no" in the constitutional referendum of last May. The same militiamen, to inquire about the reasons for the violent beatings inflicted on their friend, beat the other two victims.

Sos-Torture/Burundi notes the violence of members of imbonerakure militiamen, as well as the impunity they enjoy. None of the alleged perpetrators have been apprehended by the police to date.

- On 20 July 2018 the National Intelligence Service agents arrested Jacques Ndikumana and Juvenal Harikuriyo in Buganda commune, Cibitoke province (north-west of the country). Relatives report that the two men are activists of the opposition party FNL, accused of wanting to join rebels based in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

SOS-Torture/Burundi notes an arbitrary arrest without a warrant, as well as the refusal to communicate to relatives the place of detention of these two persons.

3. The members of the Imbonerakure militia racket the population in Kirundo

Sos-Torture/Burundi has learned from several witnesses that members of imbonerakure militiamen have erected several barriers to request enforced contributions for 2020 elections in Burundi. Racket cases are reported in Mugendo, Murungurira and Ntega of Ntega commune, Kirundo province (north of the country) on July 14, 2018.

Imbonerakure militiamen requires each person using different routes of these zones to show a receipt attesting that they have paid the required contribution of two thousand (2,000) francs; or to pay on the spot in case of default of receipt. Witnesses also report that they have been threatened with no longer receiving any administrative services or health care if these contributions are not made.

These are serious constraints on populations already impoverished by the country's socio-economic situation. The enforced collection of these amounts also does not assure the population that the funds reach the public treasury. The coercion and threats of imbonerakure militias raise fears of embezzlement, as well as increasing pressure on the population as the deadline for the elections approaches.



SOS-Torture/Burundi was initiated with the aim of informing national and international opinion about serious human rights violations under way in Burundi through monitoring reports, particularly on torture, arbitrary arrests, enforced 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 the Bujumbura City Council.

SOS-TORTURE