

STATEMENT AFTER THE ORDINARY SUMMIT OF EAC HEADS OF STATES

SOS-Torture/Burundi followed with attention the 18th Ordinary Summit of the East African Community Heads of State, held in Dar-Es-Salaam on 20 May 2017.

The summit proceeds by a few days consultation session of civil society in exile scheduled in Entebbe, Uganda on 24 and 25 May 2017 with clauses that exclude certain civil society leaders.

In front of numerous crimes and serious human rights violations committed in Burundi for more than two years, it is clear that the East African Community Heads of State have never condemned these acts targeting Burundian citizens. Although the Heads of State of East African Community countries had taken up the case of Burundi and had appointed a Mediator and then a Facilitator to resolve the Burundi crisis, the 18th East African Community Summit backwards while the work of the Facilitator Benjamin William Mkapa has been stalled for several months.

SOS-Torture/Burundi is surprised by the Mediator's statements on the Burundi crisis, the Ugandan President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, who disagrees with the European Union's decision to impose sanctions against Burundi; by arguing that this decision should be analyzed in advance by the East African Community countries of which Burundi is a member. These sanctions fit perfectly into the commitments the Burundian government has made towards the European Union and are binding only on Burundi. These declarations constitute a denial of all the crimes and serious human rights violations ongoing in Burundi and support Burundian President Pierre Nkurunziza, whose police agents and Imbonerakure militiamen have committed crimes since President Pierre Nkurunziza decided to run for the third contested term, in violation of the Constitution and the Arusha Peace Agreement, and putting aside all democratic principles.

SOS-Torture/Burundi notes that the East African Community is unable to find a solution to the Burundi crisis which has already killed more than 2,000 persons, several hundred victims of enforced disappearances, more than 8,000 arbitrary arrests and at least 500,000 persons forced to Exile, mainly in the same countries of the East African Community.

SOS-Torture/Burundi request European Union to remain close to its positions and principles and to maintain and even strengthen the sanctions, as the Burundian government will not accept to respect its commitments under the " Cotonou Agreement", and will not engage in an inclusive dialogue to bring the crisis to a peaceful end. The recent adoption of the draft of Criminal code and that of criminal Procedure code containing a provision derogating from the requirement of search warrant and its authorization overnight constituted a serious setback.

SOS-Torture/Burundi also request the African Union and the United Nations to acknowledge the failure of the East African Community in the resolution of the serious crisis that Burundi has been experiencing since 2015 and its implication so that crimes that are silently committed in Burundi stop quickly, protect the Burundian people, and appoint a new mediator, considering barriers and complacency of the current team designated by the East African Community.

May 22, 2017