

SOS-TORTURE BURUNDI REPORT N°293 PUBLISHED ON 24 JULY 2021

This report by SOS-TortureBurundi covers the period from 17 to 24 July 2021 regarding cases of human rights violations in Burundi.

At least four (4) people were murdered during the period in different localities of the country and one (1) was seriously injured by a group of Imbonerakure in Karuzi province.

The report also deplores the cases of seven (7) people who were victims of arbitrary arrests and three (3) others who were abducted.

1. Violations of the right to life

- On Saturday 17 July 2021, a woman known as Léocadie Kabihogo (38 years old) was killed following a bullet fired by a policeman on Kabandehill, Cewe zone, in the commune and province of Kirundo (northern Burundi).

According to witnesses, the policeman was "treating" her for a disease of the anus called "*igisyo*" in the locality which, according to popular belief, is cured by inserting the barrel of a gun into the anus in order to pull the trigger while the weapon is unloaded. The policeman then fired, even though there was a bullet left in the chamber of the gun, and seriously injured the victim, who succumbed to her injuries in hospital, where she had been rushed to.



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- On the night of Monday 19 July 2021, unidentified criminals murdered a man known as Amiel Bikorimana, aged about 50, on Rugeregere hill, Rugombo commune, in Cibitoke province (north-west of Burundi).

According to sources on the spot, the victim was murdered with machetes on the way home and his body was discovered the same night at around 8p.m.

The same sources specify that the victim was accused of witchcraft by his neighbours because of the death threat leaflets that had been spread on his native hill and that he had previously escaped assassination attempts on several occasions.

SOS-Torture Burundi calls on the administrative, police and judicial authorities to carry out a serious investigation to discover the perpetrators of this crime and to put an end to the recurrent phenomenon of witchcraft in this region, in particular through education and awareness-raising activities to help the population abandon their superstitious beliefs linked to witchcraft.

- On Monday 19 July 2021, the lifeless body of an unidentified woman was pulled from the Musanzaza River, at the foot of the Buta hill, Gitaba zone, in the commune and province of Rutana (south-east Burundi).

According to sources on the spot, this operation was carried out by agents of the Red Cross in Rutana in collaboration with those of the civil protection police and the body of the victim was buried the same day on the orders of the administration.

- In the afternoon of Tuesday 20 July 2021, a lifeless body of an unidentified woman was found in a eucalyptus grove on Mudaturwa sub-hill, Mayange hill, Bigina zone, Kayogoro commune, in Makamba province (southern Burundi).

According to witnesses from the scene of the macabre discovery, the body of the naked victim had been amputated head and legs.

SOS-Torture Burundi deploras the resurgence of crime throughout the country despite the official discourse of the authorities who seem to have adopted a policy of denial of reality and calls on them to initiate independent and impartial investigations to curb crime in general and the phenomenon of lifeless bodies found here and there on the national territory in particular.

2. Violations of the right to physical integrity

- On the evening of Sunday 18 July 2021, Emmanuel Ndezwenimana, a member of the National Congress for Liberty (CNL) party, was beaten and seriously injured by a group of five Imbonerakure on Muyange hill, Bugenyuzi commune, in Karuzi province (central-eastern Burundi).

According to witnesses, Emmanuel Ndezwenimana was beaten up in a refreshment bar on Muyange hill while he was trying to advise a member of his family not to get involved in an argument with these Imbonerakure, who then took advantage of the situation to attack him, on the orders of the hill leader, Cyprien Hategekimana.

The same sources state that the victim was beaten until he lost consciousness and that he was evacuated to a local health facility for emergency treatment where he is still being admitted, while the hill leader and the Imbonerakure are still walking around freely without being bothered, even though the local police have been informed of the case.

SOS-Torture Burundi denounces the abuses committed with impunity by young people from the ruling CNDD-FDD (National Council for the Defence of Democracy - Forces for the Defence of Democracy) party into an environment of political intolerance that is becoming increasingly worrying and in a prevaricating political

context where the perfidious state authorities never stop singing that everything is fine in the country.

3. Violations of the right to liberty: arbitrary arrests and detentions

- Since the night of Friday 16 July at around 9p.m., a young girl by the name of Nadine Kanyange, originally from the Bikobe hill, Gitara zone, Mabanda commune, in Makamba province (southern Burundi), was arrested without a warrant at her home in the centre of Gahama, in the same commune, by the head of the National Intelligence Service (SNR) in the province of Makamba, Méroé Ntunzwenimana.

According to sources on the spot, Nadine Kanyange was taken on board the SNR vehicle and spent the same night in the Makamba provincial police station before being taken on board the same vehicle the next day to the SNR offices in Bujumbura.

Information from family members reveals that the victim was taken out of the SNR detention centre in Bujumbura to the home of Méroé Ntunzwenimana before losing all trace of him.

- On the night of Sunday to Monday 19 July 2021 at around 3a.m., three men and two women were arbitrarily arrested at their respective homes on the hills of Mpota, Mwumba and Nyaruvumu in the Kibezi zone, Mugamba commune, in Bururi province (southern Burundi). These are Alexis Motomoto, nicknamed Mukizwa, Désiré Nshimirimana, Pierre Tuyisenge, Evelyne Kamikazi and Dévotte Nkunuzuburundi, who were also subjected to physical violence by police officers during their arrest.

According to sources on the spot, police officers led by the police commander in Mugamba, Moïse Arakaza, nicknamed Nyeganyega, burst into the households of these five people and apprehended them one by one, without presenting a warrant or giving explanations to their families, after breaking down the doors of their houses. All five were taken to the police station in Muramba in two vehicles belonging to the Burundi TeaBoard in Tora.

The same sources say that the two women left their young children alone, especially Evelyne Kamikazi who is raising her children alone after her husband, a former military officer of the ex-FAB (Burundian Armed Forces), was exiled in 2015.

According to the same sources, Nduwayo, the hill leader of Mpota, was also arrested on Monday morning when he was at the police station in Muramba to inquire about the fate of those arrested the day before.

SOS-Torture Burundi recalls that arbitrary arrest is a serious infringement of the right to liberty of any person, which is made an offence by the Burundian penal code and constitutes a violation of several international human rights protection instruments that Burundi has ratified, including Article 9 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

4. Cases of abduction or enforced disappearance

- Since the evening of 15 July 2021, a member of the CNL party in Kayokwe commune in Mwaro province who is known as Emmanuel Ndayishimiye, originally from Ruramba hill in the same commune, has been missing.

According to sources on the spot, Emmanuel Ndayishimiye was arrested at his place of work in a hairdresser's saloon located in the trading centre of Kibumbu, on Saswe 1hill, by SNR agents, under the orders of the communal representative of



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the CNDD-FDD in Kayokwecommune, and was taken away in a Toyota Hilux pickup with tinted windows to an unknown destination.

SOS-Torture Burundi denounces the persistence of political intolerance by members of the CNDD-FDD towards activists of opposition political parties, particularly those of the CNL, and calls on the country's authorities, in this case the Head of State, to clean up the political climate so that all citizens can peacefully enjoy all their fundamental rights enshrined in the Burundian Constitution and in other laws emanating from it.

- Since the night of Friday last week, 16 July 2021, at around 11p.m., a young man known as Amuri Kwizera alias Babu (33 years old), living in Nyakabiga I, 15th Avenue No. 8, Mukazacommune, in the municipality of Bujumbura, was abducted not far from his home by men in military uniforms and taken on board the white Toyota Hilux pickup with tinted windows of his abductors to an unknown destination.

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According to witnesses, Amuri Kwizera was having a glass of beer with his friends in the same quarter on 15th Avenue No. 9 when the military dragged him away from the group without presenting an arrest warrant or announcing the reason for his arrest.

- On 22 July 2021, Berty Nduwayezu, an employee of the Royal Palace Hotel in Bujumbura, was violently abducted from his workplace by police officers of the API (Support for the protection of institutions).

According to witnesses to the horrific scene, the large number of police officers who abducted Berty Nduwayezu came in three vehicles (two police pick-ups and a civilian car) and, when they arrived in the inner car park, they jumped on him and threw him into one of the pick-ups, after having violently beaten him several times without any explanation.



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The same sources reveal that the victim was first taken to his home in the Kinanira quarter by his kidnapers for a search and seizure session and that they then took away his personal belongings and other property before taking him away again to an unknown destination and after threatening his pregnant wife that she would not see her husband again.

SOS-Torture Burundi deplores the persistence of cases of abductions carried out by law enforcement officers who have no legal standing to arrest people suspected of having broken the law. It calls on the authorities to take effective measures to stop these violations of citizens' rights and bring the perpetrators to justice. Indeed, the law on deprivation of liberty clearly determines the agents of the State vested with the power of arrest, in this case the judicial police officers, and provides for a number of rights and procedural guarantees to persons deprived of their liberty which must be observed on pain of the nullity of the entire procedure.

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SOS-Torture/Burundi was initiated with the aim of informing national and international opinion about serious human rights violations taking place in Burundi through monitoring reports, particularly on torture, arbitrary arrests, forced disappearances, sexual violence and summary executions.

This initiative to inform on the realities of the country followed the carnage of a hundred people killed during the day of 11 and 12 December 2015 by the police and military under the pretext of pursuing rebels who had just attacked military camps located on the outskirts of the capital.

The areas affected are said to be those contesting the third term of President Nkurunziza, namely Musaga, Mutakura, Cibitoke, Nyakabiga and Jabe, the last two being located in the centre of the Bujumbura town hall.