

## **SOS-TORTURE/BURUNDI REPORT N°289 PUBLISHED ON 26 JUNE 2021**

This report of SOS-Torture/Burundi covers the period from 19<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> June 2021 concerning cases of human rights violations in Burundi.

At least four (6) persons were murdered and one (1) seriously injured during the period in different localities of the country.

The report also deploras four (4) persons who were victims of arbitrary arrests and detentions by police officers and agents of the National Intelligence Service (SNR).

### **1. Violations of the right to life**

- In the afternoon of Sunday 20 June 2021 at around 1 p.m., the lifeless body of Sylvestre Bidoreye was found in the Nyabiho river, in Gitaramuka commune of Karuzi province (east-central of Burundi).

According to witnesses on the spot, Sylvestre Bidoreye and his cousin Joseph Muhigirwa, members of the National Congress for Liberty party (CNL), had been called on the phone on the night of Wednesday 16 June 2021 by Jean Marie Vianney Mbonimpa, the head of the Imbonerakure militia on the Gasasa hill of the same commune, and were accused of being among of a gang who stole from households on that hill. The same sources reveal that Imbonerakure who had gathered at the home of the chief of Gasasa hill atrociously killed Sylvestre Bidoreye with machetes, before throwing his body into the Nyabiho river and that they also seriously injured his cousin who was lucky enough to escape in extremis from his executioners.

SOS-Torture/Burundi calls on the Burundian authorities to put an end to the impunity of the Imbonerakure militia and some local administrators and to carry out serious

investigations in order to punish the perpetrators of this human barbarity in accordance with law.

- On the night of Sunday to Monday, 21 June 2021, at around midnight, unidentified persons killed a man known as Yamungu alias Sungura on Mugumure hill, Muyange zone, Nyanza-Lac commune, in Makamba province (southern Burundi).

Sources on the spot reveal that the victim was killed with stones near his home and suspect Thierry Nibasumba and Léopold Toro, who had shared with the victim a drink in a local bistro the same night. The same sources state that the two men fled after the crime.

SOS-Torture/Burundi calls on the police and judicial authorities to carry out independent investigations in order to determine the perpetrators and the motive of the crime.

- On the morning of Monday 21 June 2021, at around 5 a.m., the lifeless body of a man who was later identified as Prosper Bintunimana (39 years old), a native of the Ndava hill, Buganda commune, in Cibitoke province has been discovered on the NR5, lying in blood by women selling fruits and vegetables in Buterere zone, Ntahangwa commune, in the Bujumbura town (western Burundi).

According to sources on the spot, the victim had been abducted on the night of Sunday 20 June 2021 at around 8 p.m. by SNR agents on the Nyamitanga hill, about 7 kilometers from his native hill, on suspicion of collaboration with armed individuals crossing the Rusizi river from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

SOS-Torture/Burundi calls on the Burundian authorities to protect all Burundian citizens on an equal footing and to put an end to the phenomenon of enforced disappearances, sometimes followed by assassinations, which are mainly attributable to SNR agents.

- On the night of Wednesday, June 23, 2021, on the Mujigo hill, Buyengero commune, in the province of Rumonge (southwestern Burundi), a group of unidentified armed men ambushed two men on their way back to their homes and injured Polycarpe Iwanyibuka, aged about twenty, who died at the Kizuka health center due to bullet wounds.

Sources on the spot said that the criminals also stole from the trader a large sum of money of at least four million Burundian francs and three mobile phones.

SOS-Torture/Burundi calls on the country's authorities to proceed without delay with the disarmament of the civilian population, particularly the young Imbonerakure who have benefited from the distribution of firearms by administrative and police officials.

- On the night of Friday, June 26, 2021, two lifeless bodies of as yet unidentified males were discovered in villages 3 and 6 of the commune of Gihanga, Bubanza province in the west of the country.

Witnesses describe horrific images of people visibly killed by sticks in an area that was patrolled throughout the night by the Imbonerakure militia, who took the place of the security forces.

## **2. Violations of the right to liberty: arbitrary arrests and detentions**

- Since Friday 18 June 2021, Rénovat Barateganya and Sylvestre Minani alias Runzanga, two retired ex-FAB (Burundian Armed Forces) and Désiré Nkuzimana alias Maso, have been detained in Makamba communal police station jailhouse. They were all arrested by police officers from the provincial police station in Makamba in collaboration with responsible of the SNR (National Intelligence Service) in Makamba province, Méroé Ntunzwenimana.

According to witnesses, the two retired ex-FAB were arrested at their home on the Rutegama hill, zone of Gishiha, Vugizo commune, in the province of

Makamba (southern Burundi) while the third was arrested at his workplace in Makamba in a Memento transport agency on the same day.

The same sources reveal that the triple arrest took place one week after the arrest of another retired ex-FAB, Zénon Kabura, accused of a grenade attack that targeted the head of the Mpinga zone in the same commune.

SOS-Torture/Burundi deploras the abusive arrests of which some elements of the former Burundian Armed Forces are regularly victims and requests that the arrests of people suspected of having committed an offence be always carried out in compliance with the relevant provisions of the code of criminal procedure.

- Since Thursday 24 June 2021, the provincial head of the SNR in Makamba, Méroé Ntunzwenima, and the head of the Gitara zone, Serges Nibayubahe, have been detaining two women, Antigone Sindayiganza and Francine Niyonsaba, respectively arrested on the Budaketwa hill, Mabanda commune and in the centre of the same commune, in Makamba province (southern Burundi).

Sources on the spot reveal that Antigone Sindayiganza was arrested in her brother's name, a teacher from the locality who fled the country following persecution by Imbonerakure militia and SNR agents, while the reason for the arrest of Francine Niyonsaba, a wife of retired ex-FAB soldier, is not yet known.

SOS-Torture/Burundi denounces the arbitrary arrests carried out with impunity by SNR agents and recalls that the rule of law requires that criminal responsibility should be individual.

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.