

SOS-TORTURE/BURUNDI REPORT N°290 PUBLISHED ON 3 JULY 2021

This report by SOS-Torture/Burundi covers the period from 26 June to 3 July 2021 concerning cases of human rights violations in Burundi.

At least twenty-six (26) people were murdered during this period in various localities of the country, including 21 people killed in an ambush by a group of armed men on two vehicles at Munanira in the commune of Rutegama on the Muramvya-Gitega axis.

The report also deploras nine (9) people seriously injured, including eight (8) in the same ambush in Rutegama, as well as twelve (12) opposition party activists who were victims of arbitrary arrests and detentions by Imbonerakure and police officers following this carnage.

1. Violations of the right to life

- On the night of Saturday 26 June 2021, at around 7 p.m., a group of unidentified armed men carried out a deadly ambush on the Muramvya-Gitega road at a place commonly known as '*Kwa Comptable*', on the Munanira hill, Rutegama commune, in Muramvya province, in the centre of the country.

According to sources in the locality, this attack took the lives of at least 21 people, including 14 burnt bodies in two vehicles of the Hiace and Probox types and a couple returning from a family celebration killed on the outskirts of the attack by the assailants as they fled up the Gashingwa hill, a mile from the ambush site. The same sources report that eight people were injured and that they were all evacuated to health facilities close to the scene of the carnage: three wounded were taken to Kibimba hospital (Giheta commune, in Gitega province), three others to Kibuye hospital (Bukirasazi commune, in Gitega province) and two wounded were taken to Muramvya hospital. Among the people killed, some shopkeepers have already been

identified, completely burnt out in the Probox vehicle, who had accompanied their colleague, Alexandre Mukurarinda, from Nyabihanga commune, in Mwaro province, in the same vehicle to a bride price ceremony in Bitezi commune in Ruyigi province. The victims were Eric Nduwimana, from Nyabihanga commune, in Mwaro province; Jean Eraste Nduwimana, from Muyogoro hill, Ndava commune, in Mwaro province; Évariste Manirakiza from Kayanza province and a man named François, a trader at Kinama market, who died after being evacuated to a health facility.

SOS-Torture Burundi deploras the fact that the lives of peaceful citizens continue to be mowed down by armed men in deadly ambushes on various roads in the country and expresses its solidarity and compassion to the victims and their families who no longer know which way to turn in a country where the authorities never stop claiming that peace and security reign everywhere on the national territory. It calls on the State of Burundi to truly protect its population and to initiate credible independent investigations in order to identify these criminals and the motive that drives them to commit these heinous crimes, instead of remaining silent as usual.

- The lifeless body of a man known as Pontien Ndugaritse was found on the evening of Monday 28 June 2021 lying in a gutter at the place commonly known as Bonesha in the Kamesa quarter, Musaga zone, Muha commune, in the municipality of Bujumbura.

According to sources on the spot, the victim had gone to the Musaga market on Sunday 27 June to buy food for her chickens, but her family waited in vain for her return.

The same sources said that the perpetrators and the motive for the crime have not yet been identified.

- In the afternoon of Monday 28 June 2021, the lifeless body of an unidentified girl was found on the avenue of Ruheshi, in the Kibenga quarter of the Kinindo zone, Muha commune, in Bujumbura town hall.
- On the morning of Tuesday 29 June 2021, at around 8 a.m., a policeman by the name of Raymond Butoyi shot and killed a woman called Goreth Ntakirutimana following disagreements over the delimitation of their contiguous plots of land in Gisyo quarter, Kanyosha zone, Muha commune, in the south of the Bujumbura town hall.

According to witnesses, the policeman fired several bullets, about 16, at the woman's head, chest, neck and arms and she died immediately.

According to the same sources, although the construction work had been suspended for a month by local administration on the disputed area, the perpetrator resumed the work at around 2 a.m. on that fateful day, which prompted the victim's intervention.

SOS-Torture Burundi reminds the police authorities that the upsurge of blunders attributable to some elements of the National Police, mainly from the CNDD-FDD (National Council for the Defence of Democracy - Forces for the Defence of Democracy movement, are due to the impunity they enjoy and the lax discipline observed since this force has become politicised in the service of the ruling party.

- On the night of Tuesday 29 June 2021, at around 9 p.m., Iddy Bigirimana, a Toyota Probox driver on the Bujumbura-Gitega road, who lived in the Nyabisindu district of the town of Gitega, died in Gitega hospital as a result of gunshot wounds inflicted by three passengers he had picked up on board his vehicle heading for Nyarusange commune, in Gitega province (central Burundi).

According to witnesses, the three passengers boarded the vehicle in Bujumbura and led the driver to believe that they were masons on their way to the construction site of a local businessman in Nyarusange. When they arrived near a car wash in the

locality of Nkondo, in the commune of Nyarusange, these passengers asked the driver to park in order to relieve themselves in a small bush and it was then that one of the passengers took out his pistol and shot at point blank range at the level of the jaws at the driver who was seriously wounded and at his friend who was in the same vehicle who was slightly injured.

- On the night of Wednesday 30 June at around 7 p.m., a young man named Bernardin Baserukiye (20 years old), who had recently been released under a presidential pardon in April, was killed and shot by unidentified individuals on Kivumu hill, Mugamba commune, in Bururi province, in southern Burundi.

Sources on the spot reveal that young Bernardin had first answered a phone call from an unknown person before being abducted by unknown persons who shot him not far from his parents' home.

Relatives of the victim suspect the Police Commender in Mugamba, Moïse Arakaza, nicknamed Nyeganyega, of being behind the murder. This policeman first arrested the victim's younger brother, who remains in detention for collaboration with rebel groups, as well as his father, who was recently released after paying money.

SOS-Torture Burundi calls for the opening of an impartial and independent investigation in order to find the perpetrators of this murder and calls on the police authorities to stop the persecution inflicted by this police officer on real or presumed opponents, particularly in Mugamba commune.

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

- Since the attack in Rutegama on the Bugarama-Gitega road during the night of 26 June 2021, a wave of arbitrary arrests of members of the National Congress for Liberty (CNL) party and from the UPRONA (Union for National Progress) party have been carried out in the centre of Rutegama in Muramvya province (central Burundi).

According to sources from the CNL leaders in Rutegama, seven (7) local leaders of this party and one (1) member of UPRONA, a certain Dieudonné, were arrested during the night of Saturday to Sunday, 27 June 2021, at around 2 a.m. at their respective homes by Imbonerakure and police officers in the centre of Rutegama and on the hills of Gashingwa, Cumba and Munanira in the same commune and were taken to the provincial police station in Muramvya where they are still detained. They are Olivier Irangarukiye (CNL communal secretary in Rutegama), Camille Irampezagiye (member of the CNL provincial committee in Muramvya responsible for youth); Gaëtan Niyongere (member of the CNL provincial committee in Muramvya), Jean Claude Nkuzimana (CNL leader in Rutegama zone), a certain Jacques (member of the CNL committee in Rutegama zone) and the person named Anthère (CNL leader on Cumba hill), to which should be added Fiacre Niyokindi (CNL communal leader in Rutegama), who was arrested on Monday 28 June 2021 and taken to the same cell.

The same sources reveal that four (4) other CNL activists were arrested during the same night in the locality of Gashingwa and taken to the same prison, thus making a total of twelve (12) people arrested and arbitrarily detained following this attack in Rutegama.

SOS-Torture Burundi deplores the arbitrary arrests of a political and ethnic nature, carried out outside of any legal framework and always directed against real or presumed members of the opposition or against some retired soldiers of the ex-FAB (Burundian Armed Forces) each time attacks are carried out by unidentified people who have not even claimed authorship of such attacks. It asks the police, judicial and administrative authorities to always be objective in their investigations instead of giving in to hatred and subjectivity towards anyone who has a dissonant voice in the ears of the ruling power.



SOS – Torture/Burundi

Monitoring sur les cas de torture, les arrestations arbitraires, les disparitions forcées et les exécutions sommaires au Burundi

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.