

## **REPORT N°245 OF SOS-TORTURE/BURUNDI PUBLISHED ON 22 AUGUST 2020**

This SOS-Torture report covers the period from 15 to 22 August 2020 concerning cases of human rights violations in Burundi.

At least thirteen (13) people were murdered during the period in different parts of the country.

The report also states that fourteen (14) people were seriously injured in different localities of the country and one (01) person was beaten and arbitrarily arrested by the vice-president of the youth league Imbonerakure

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

- On the night of Saturday, August 15, 2020, around 11 p.m., on Nyarurinzi hill, Buhayira zone, Murwi commune, Cibitoke province, Charles Ndikumana alias Buso (30 years old) was murdered at his home. According to sources at the scene, his attacker smashed his skull with a hoe before setting fire to the house where the victim's body was found.

Sos-Torture Burundi notes that the judicial police in Murwi arrested his wife, Gloriose Nishemeze (18 years old), who is reportedly a member of the Imbonerakure militia. She was sentenced, in flagrante delicto proceedings, to 20 years of principal penal servitude and a fine of five million Burundian francs (BIF 5,000,000) for the murder of her husband and arson.

- A lifeless body of a man known as Dominique Niyondiko aka Mababa was found Sunday morning 16 August 2020 in the valley of Ndago hill, Muheka zone, Songa commune in Bururi province where he had gone with his family for a final mourning ceremony on the same hill from the city of Bujumbura. His relatives say they had lost track of him on the evening of 15 August 2020 when he had just dropped off his friend Prosper, alias PAM, in Rumeza. The motives for his assassination have not yet been elucidated.

SOS-Torture Burundi notes that the police in Songa arrested Divine Ndikumana for meeting the victim on the road before his abduction. This woman is being held in police custody in Songa

- On the night of Saturday, August 15, 2020, on Cimbizi hill, Bubanza commune and province, unidentified criminals killed Sylvestre Mossi by beheading. During this attack, these criminals also seriously injured his two cows and killed his two goats. According to sources on the spot, the victim's body was found mutilated, his tongue severed and his eyes and nose torn out and taken away by the executioners. The motive for this horrible crime is not yet known.

- On Sunday, August 16, 2020, around noon, on Gasenyi hill and zone, Buganda commune, Cibitoke province, a man named Jean Claude Bigirimana was killed by stabbing him in the heart.

Sos-Torture Burundi notes that the police directly arrested Aaron Ntaraka, the alleged perpetrator, and took him to the dungeon of Cibitoke police station for a flagrante delicto investigation. He was sentenced on Tuesday 18 August 2020 to 20 years of penal servitude by the High Court of Cibitoke for the murder of Jean Claude Bigirimana.

- On the night of Sunday 16 August 2020 in rural Kibenga Quarter of the municipality of Bujumbura, a man named Guillaume Nkeshimana was killed by strangulation in his home by people who had broken into his bedroom.

SOS-Torture Burundi has learned that the police have already arrested his wife, Béatrice Nkundwanabake, for investigative reasons.

- During the night of Sunday 16 August 2020 at about 7:30 pm, Richard Gashirahamwe was killed with machete blows on the Butare hill in Kayogoro commune of Makamba province.

SOS-Torture Burundi notes that the police have arrested the brother of the alleged murder victim and is being held in the dungeon of Makamba provincial police station for investigative reasons.

- In the provincial capital of Kayanza, in the morning of Monday 17 August 2020 at about 5:30 am, a policeman known as Nestor Sindihebura alias Tindo shot and killed Brigadier Police Philbert Ndiokubwayo nicknamed Kiduduye and Céleus Ndikubwayo, the taxi-bike driver who died of kidney injuries after arriving at the hospital in Ngozi where he had been urgently evacuated. According to sources at the scene, both victims were on the same bicycle when they were shot by police agent Nestor Sindihebura.

SOS-Torture Burundi notes that Kayanza police arrested 5 people who were at the scene of the crime including Nestor Sindihebura for investigative reasons. The High Court of Kayanza on Tuesday 18 August 2020 sentenced police officer Nestor Sindihebura alias Tindo to life imprisonment for the murder of Philbert Ndihekubwayo and Céleus Ndikubwayo.

- The body of an unidentified man wrapped in sheets was found in the morning of Monday 17 August 2020 near the administrative office of Maramvya zone, Mutimbuzi commune, Bujumbura province. Sources at the scene indicate that the man was reportedly shot dead in another location by police officers escorting Pierre Nkurikiye, spokesperson for the Ministry of Interior, Community Development and Public Security who lives in Buhomba quarter of the same Maramvya zone. Indeed, according to these sources, three of these police officers, including Philbert Arakaza, a native of Karusi province, had spent the afternoon of Sunday, August 16, 2020, sharing a drink with the victim in a bistro located in this zone.

SOS-Torture Burundi notes that the police have not so far apprehended any suspects.

- On Monday 17 August 2020 at around 7 p.m., a man named Fiston Majambere was killed by soldiers in barracks in the Rukoko nature reserve. According to his neighbours in village 6 of Gihanga commune Bubanza province, the victim, who is a farmer, had spent the day in his fields located in Rukoko forest, which he left at around 7 p.m. According to the same sources, following incursions by rebel groups from the Democratic Republic of the Congo through the forest to disrupt security in the communes surrounding Rukoko, the administration of Gihanga had taken the measure that all citizens who are engaged in farming activities in Rukoko forest must have left the forest by 5 p.m. at the latest.

SOS-Torture Burundi notes that the population of village 6 expressed surprise that soldiers could shoot at a person without a weapon.

- Clovis Niyongabo (20 years old) from Mujenywa Hill, Shombo commune, Karusi province died on Tuesday morning 18 August 2020 at the health centre of Mayange in Bigina zone of Kayogora commune in Makamba province following acts of torture inflicted on him by Tanzanian law enforcement agencies when he returned from Tanzania. According to witnesses on the spot, the victim had been tortured together with two other Burundians, Claude Mugisha from

the same commune, who were also tortured and hospitalized at Mayange health center, as well as another whose identity was not disclosed.

- The body of Pierre-Claver Ndagijimana aka Bitore, a native of Mabanda , Makamba province and driver of the Toyota Probox H8107A taxi, was discovered in the morning of Wednesday 19 August 2020 in Nyakabiga near the University of Burundi.

Information received by SOS-Torture Burundi reveals that Pierre-Claver Ndagijimana had disappeared in Bujumbura on Friday evening 14 August 2020 along with his vehicle.

SOS-Torture Burundi notes that no investigation has been opened to identify his torturers.

- On Kigaga hill, Ntega commune, Kirundo province, a lifeless body of Ntirandekura, former head of the same hill and currently an agricultural monitor, was found hanging on a branch of a tree.

SOS-Torture Burundi notes that no investigation has been opened to elucidate the circumstances of his death.

## 2. Violations of the right to liberty and physical security

- On Saturday evening, 15 August 2020, at about 7.45 p.m., in the town of Bukemba Commune (Rubirizi sub-hill), Rutana province, an unidentified criminal threw a grenade that exploded in a mill house belonging to a member of the National Council for Liberty (CNL) party, inside which the owner and his clients had come to grind their grain. According to a police source in Bukemba, four people were seriously injured, namely Vincent Sabushimike, a member of CNL and candidate in the upcoming hill elections, Fulgence Havyarimana, Lucien Sibomana and an 8-year-old girl, Yvonne Kezakimana. All these victims were evacuated to Gihofi hospital in the same commune for medical care.

A source in CNL party reveals that this criminal was particularly targeting the owner of the mill for political motives and believes that the attack was perpetrated by Imbonerakure who had spent all Saturday morning in paramilitary training.

SOS-Torture Burundi notes that Bukemba police have not arrested any suspects to date.

- During the night of Saturday 15 August 2020 at about 7 p.m., in Matongo Commune, Kayanza province, lawyer Ezéchiel Cimpaye alias Minani was violently beaten by the vice-president of the young Imbonerakure in Matongo commune. After the beatings, the head of Imbonerakure arbitrarily arrested him and ordered police officers to imprison him in the dungeon of Matongo communal police station.

SOS-Torture Burundi notes that lawyer Ezéchiel Cimpaye was released Tuesday, August 18, 2020 after spending three (03) days in solitary confinement.

- On Gifurwe hill, Mpanda commune, Bubanza province, 5 people including 3 children were injured on Monday, 17 August 2020 around 6pm following an explosion of a grenade found in a palm oil field by children who were trying to handle the device. Witnesses at the scene indicate that the injured people were evacuated to the hospital in Mpanda and that they are out of danger.

SOS-Torture Burundi notes one case of enforced disappearance for political motives.



## 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 on serious human rights violations under way in Burundi through monitoring reports, particularly on torture, arbitrary arrests, forced disappearances, sexual violence and summary executions.

This initiative to provide information on the realities of the country followed the carnage of some 100 people killed on 11 and 12 December 2015 by police and military officers under the pretext of pursuing rebels who had just attacked military camps on the outskirts of the capital.

The affected zones are said to be contesting President Nkurunziza's third term of office, namely Musaga, Mutakura, Cibitoke, Nyakabiga and Jabe, the last two being located in the centre of Bujumbura City Hall.

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