

REPORT N°246 OF SOS-TORTURE/BURUNDI PUBLISHED ON AUGUST 29, 2020

This SOS-Torture report covers the period from 22 to 29 August 2020 regarding cases of human rights violations in Burundi.

At least twenty-seven (27) people were murdered during the period in different localities of the country. Among those killed were 16 people who died in clashes that opposed the security forces against a group of armed men since last Sunday in Bugarama, Muhuta and Burambi communes in Rumonge province and 2 people who were killed in an attack by armed men on Ndayi hill in the Bikanka zone of Mukike commune.

The report also states that eleven (11) people were seriously injured in different parts of the country, including six (06) people in an attack by armed men in the Bikanka zone of Mukike commune.

Finally, the report notes 29 cases of arbitrary arrests including nine (09) persons suspected of collaborating with the rebel group that attacked several localities in the Muhuta, Bugarama and Burambi communes in Rumonge province and about twenty (20) young men arrested in Nyakabiga zone during a search carried out by the police.

1. Violations of the right to life and physical integrity

- On Gikinga hill, Gakwende zone, Gitanga commune, Rutana province, an old man of about sixty years was killed in the afternoon on Saturday, 23rd August 2020 by a group of four Imbonerakure. According to local sources, these Imbonerakure were ordered by a certain Niyukuri Léonidas who offered them a sum of two hundred thousand Burundian francs (200,000 BIF) to liquidate the victim, who is also a member of his family.

SOS-Torture Burundi has learned that the sponsor as well as 4 material perpetrators of this assassination are in the hands of the police for investigation.

- On the night of 23 August 2020 at about 11:30 p.m., on Bitare hill, Muyebe zone, Musigati commune, Bubanza province (north-western part of the country), Vestine Bavuga (27 years old) was killed. The motive for this murder is not yet known.

SOS-Torture Burundi learned that the alleged perpetrator of the murder, Bigirimana Ezéchiél, a neighbor of the victim, was apprehended by the police and is being held in custody for investigative reasons.

- Since Sunday morning, 23rd August 2020, a group of armed men attacked Gahuni locality, Gitaza zone, Bugarama commune, Rumonge province, in the southwest of the country. The fight continued until Tuesday, August 25, 2020 in several localities of the Rumonge province including that of Ku Nyoni located on the border between Mugamba commune of the Bururi province and Burambi commune of Rumonge province. According to the police and administrative sources in Rumonge, the record of clashes between these armed men allegedly belonging to Red-Tabara rebel group and the security forces reported at least 16 people killed, including 11 residents who had been abducted by the armed men and 5 rebels killed after being captured.

In addition, the same sources confirmed that Monge forest in Bugarama commune was burned by soldiers and police so that "rebels" hiding there could show themselves. Moreover, these clashes were followed by a wave of arbitrary arrests of young students on vacation in the Mugamba and Mukike communes, close to the localities where the fighting took place.

SOS-Torture Burundi has concern that this attack could be a pretext for arbitrary arrests of people belonging or suspected of belonging to opposition political parties or not supporting the current regime.

- On Gasasa hill, Rugari zone, Musinga commune and province (north-eastern part of the country), Sandrine Niyonzima (25 years old) was killed by strangulation in the night of Sunday to Monday, 24 August 2020 by persons not yet identified who surprised her in a sleep in the company of her two children, including a two-year-old. The motive for this murder is not yet known.

SOS-Torture Burundi has learned that the police arrested her husband and her father-in-law for investigative reasons.

- A lifeless body of a young girl who has not been identified was discovered on the morning of Monday 24 August 2020 on 13th Avenue in Twinyoni quarter, Kamenge zone, Ntahangwa commune, north of Bujumbura city. The body of the girl in underwear was rolled up in a bag, legs and arms tied with a rope. According to sources at the scene, the victim's body was full of bruises and blood was still flowing from her wounds, suggesting that she had been killed the day before. The same sources indicate that the body of the deceased was later evacuated to the

mortuary of Prince Regent Charles Hospital after the arrival of civil protection police.

- On Murehe hill, Butihinda commune, Muyinga province, Nizigiyimana Abdoul (30 years old) was shot dead on Monday, August 24, 2020, a week after returning from exile from Kenya. According to witnesses, the victim was killed by his brother because of family conflicts related to the succession of property left by his father Bucumi Balthazar aka Gihuna.
- In Gasenyi quarter, Muyinga town province (north-east of the country), a 7-year child was killed on Tuesday, August 25, 2020 at about 7: 30 a.m. According to local sources, the child was hit by a bullet fired by his brother using a rifle from his father, who is a Burundian army officer serving at Camp Mukoni in urban centre of Muyinga. These children were playing with this weapon that their father had left at home.
- On the morning of this Thursday, August 27, 2020, the tied body of Ngendakuriyo Joachim, a native of Misakura sub-hill, Ijenda rural hill, Ijenda zone, Mugongo-Manga commune, Bujumbura province and member of the National Council for freedom (CNL), was discovered in Mubarazi river.

SOS-Torture Burundi notes that the perpetrators and motives of this assassination are not yet known.

- On Gasange sub-hill in Rutana zone and commune, the named Gilbert, polygamous of 4 women, was stabbed on Thursday 27 August 2020. Local sources indicate that the victim's children and his wives are suspected of having committed this crime and that the motives for the murder are not yet known.

SOS-Torture Burundi has learned that the children and women of the victim have been arrested by the police for investigative reasons.

- In Bururi quarter, Kinama zone, Ntahangwa commune, Bujumbura town hall, the family of the newly elected quarter chief was poisoned by an unidentified person. According to local sources, the mother of this quarter chief has already died as a result of the poison administered to her while 8 other people are hospitalized at Kamenge military hospital.

2. Violations of the right to liberty and physical security

- On Monday, August 25, 2020 at about 5:00 p.m., on Nyentakara hill, Bigina zone, Kayogoro Commune, Makamba province, Jean Marie Ngendahayo was seriously injured by a grenade explosion that occurred inside his home. The victim was urgently evacuated to a health centre in the locality.

SOS-torture Burundi notes that the motive and the perpetrators of this package are not yet identified.

- On Friday night, August 28, 2020 at about 9 p.m., on Ndayi hill, Bikanka zone, Mukike commune, Bujumbura province (west of Burundi), a group of unidentified men armed with guns, knives and machetes attacked a group of people on their way home. During this attack, two people were killed including a certain Jonas who died on the spot and a seriously injured woman who died of her wounds in an ambulance during the evacuation of the wounded to the Ijenda hospital in Mugongo-Manga commune, bordering Mukike commune. These men also seriously injured 6 people, mostly to the head, with knives and other blunt objects. Witnesses say around ten young people are reported missing in the attack.

3. Arbitrary arrests

- Two young students from Kivumu hill in Mugamba commune and whose names have not been disclosed were arrested on Monday, August 24, 2020 by military personnel on Musinzira hill, in Mukike commune, Bujumbura province (west of the country). According to witnesses, they were suspected of collaborating with the rebel group that attacked several localities in the communes of Muhuta, Bugarama and Burambi in Rumonge province (southwest of the country). According to relatives, the two young men had gone to visit relatives on Musinzira hill, a locality not far from Kivumu hill in Mugamba commune, Bururi province (south of Burundi). The whereabouts of these two young people remain unknown.

SOS-Torture Burundi notes a wave of arbitrary arrests following recent clashes between law enforcement officials and a group of armed men in the Muhuta, Bugarama and Burambi communes of Rumonge province.

- On Bigoma hill, Muyira zone, Kanyosha commune, Bujumbura province (west of the country) , two demobilized from the former Hutu FNL (National Liberation Forces) rebel movement, Melchiade Bucumi and Ezéchiél Nahimana, were arrested without a warrant at their homes on Tuesday, August 25, 2020 by police who accused them of belonging to an armed group that attacked the localities of Rumonge province between Sunday and last Tuesday.

SOS-Torture Burundi has learned that the arrested persons are being held in the dungeon of the communal police station in Kanyosha.

- On August 25, 2020, Apollinaire Nsengiyumva, a resident of Midodo hill, Burambi commune, Rumonge province, was arrested by Mariza zone chief accompanied with police officers who accused him of collaborating with Red-Tabara rebel movement.

SOS-Torture Burundi has learned that the arrested individual is being held in the dungeon of Burambi commune.

- On Kivumu hill and zone, Mugamba commune, Bururi province (south of Burundi), two young students, including the son of a primary school principal and that of the new Mugamba administrator, were arrested at their homes without a warrant by the police on 27 and 28 August 2020, respectively. According to witnesses, the police who arrested them did not provide the reason for their arrest. However, the residents of Kivumu suspect that their arrest is related to the recent attack of armed men in several localities of Rumonge province, some of which are border with Mugamba commune.

SOS-Torture Burundi notes that the place of detention of these two young people remains unknown.

- On Thursday, August 28, 2020, the municipal police commissioner in Bugarama arrested Claver Ndikumana and his son Elie Bigino at their home on Bambo hill, Ruteme zone, Bugarama commune, Rumonge province. According to local sources, the inhabitants of the hills of Bambo and Ruteme are experiencing a climate of permanent fear and believe that they are suffering the consequences of last Sunday's attack and that police officers have found a pretext to arrest people who were in their sights.

SOS-Torture Burundi learned that the relatives of the victims were not informed of the place of their detention.



SOS – Torture/Burundi

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

- On the morning of Friday, August 28, 2020, the police carried out a search in quarter 1 of Nyakabiga zone, Mukaza commune, in the city of Bujumbura. According to witnesses, the police arrested about 20 people, mostly "irregular" young boys, including foreigners of Congolese nationality, after checking household books, identity cards or other documents. According to witnesses, residents of Nyakabiga accuse some police officers of having taken advantage of this search to demand that they pay a ransom of ten thousand Burundian francs (10,000 BIF) for not being arrested.

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

This initiative to inform about 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 affected zones are said to be protesters of the third term of President Nkurunziza namely Musaga, Mutakura, Cibitoke, Nyakabiga, Jabe, the last two being located in the center of the Town Hall of Bujumbura.