

REPORT N° 251 OF SOS-TORTURE/BURUNDI PUBLISHED ON 03 OCTOBER 2020

This SOS-Torture report covers the period from 26 September to 03 October 2020 regarding cases of human rights violations in Burundi.

At least four (04) persons were murdered and three (03) persons were injured during the period in different localities of the country.

This report also deploras five (05) persons kidnapped mainly by armed men in police uniforms and Imbonerakure as well as four (04) cases of arbitrary arrests directed mainly against political opponents.

1. Violations of the right to life and physical integrity

- In the night of Saturday, September 26, 2020 around 9:30 p.m., five police officers from the police station of Rusarendera located on the Rwabitsinda hill, Busangana zone, Bukeye commune, Muramvya province, namely, OPC2 Jean Claude Ntakiyiruta, head of police station, brigadiers Juvent Bigirimana and Patrick Ngabirano and agents Shabani Nzobonimpa and Jean Claude Nzeyimana, savagely beat the named Prosper Majambere of Gashishima hill, in Bukeye commune of Muramvya province, until he died as a result of these horrible acts of torture.
- During the night of Sunday, September 27, 2020, at around 9:00 p.m., on Gafumbegeti hill, Mabayi commune, Cibitoke province, unidentified gunmen shot and killed Jean Claude Ndayishimiye and seriously injured his child. According to local sources, the late Jean Claude Ndayishimiye was killed by a group of Kinyarwanda-speaking people.
- On the night of Wednesday, September 30, 2020, at around 8:00 p.m., in Makamba II quarter of Makamba commune center, the lifeless body of a young man named Ezéchiel Ntiranyibagira, a native of Rusovu hill, in Kayogoro commune, was discovered hanging from a mosquito net in the hardware store where he worked.

According to witnesses who were at the scene of the tragedy, the victim showed no signs proving that he would have hanged himself. The body of the deceased was evacuated to Makamba Hospital morgue.

- As of October 1, 2020, the lifeless body of a young girl known as Nadine Nifasha was retrieved from a river on the hill of Nyarubere in the zone, commune and province of Rutana. According to local sources, the victim had disappeared on September 24, 2020, when she had just been endowed. The individuals who kidnapped her have not yet been identified.

SOS Torture Burundi deplores the upsurge in targeted killings and the impunity enjoyed by the perpetrators due to the lack of credible investigations and a judicial dysfunction that has become endemic in Burundi.

2. Violation of the right to physical security

- In the night of Saturday, September 26, 2020 around 09:30 p.m., five police officers from the police station of Rusarendera located on the Rwabitsinda hill, Busangana zone, in Bukeye commune of Muramvya province, namely, OPC2 Jean Claude Ntakiyiruta, head of police station, Brigadiers Juvent Bigirimana and Patrick Ngabirano and agents Shabani Nzobonimpa and Jean Claude Nzeyimana, inflicted horrible acts of torture on Salvator Nduwarugira, putting him in a critical state.
- On the night of Wednesday, September 30, 2020, at around 8:30 p.m., in Kagoma quarter, Gihinga hill, Kayokwe commune, Mwaro province, a domestic worker named Ningwanira Olivier, 23 years old, was seriously injured on his arm and stomach by bullets fired by an unidentified person when he returned to the house where he works. According to witnesses at the scene, Olivier Ningwanira was evacuated to one of the province's hospitals where he is receiving treatment.

3. Arbitrary arrests

- As of September 29, 2020, on Nyamirinzi hill, near Inanzerwe chain up to Makamba Province and Bururi, three young boys, namely Innocent Bikorimana (18 years old), from Nyamirinzi hill, Vugizo commune, Makamba province, Boris Niyongabo (18 years old), from Ruringanizo hill, Rutovu commune of Bururi province and Mpawenayo alias Mazoya (15 years old), from the same hill, were arrested in the late afternoon by young Imbonerakure led by a certain Method.

According to local sources, these young Imbonerakure intercepted them on their way back from Rutovu commune on a family visit. The same sources reveal that these young people, suspected of belonging to armed gangs, were tied up and severely tortured by these Imbonerakure before being delivered to the

commander of 4th Division of the National Defense Force (FDN) who, in turn, handed them over to Vugizo Communal Police Station for investigation.

SOS Torture Burundi denounces arbitrary arrests carried out with impunity by Imbonerakure militiamen who do not have the status of judicial police officers empowering them to legally carry out judicial arrests.

- In the morning of Friday, October 2, 2020, police officers arrested the former deputy elected in the constituency of Bubanza during the 2015-2020 legislature, Fabien Banciryano, at his home located in the Ngagara zone, in the urban commune of Ntahangwa, in Bujumbura town and took him to the dungeon of the Special Research Bureau (BSR).

According to sources on the spot, he was questioned about his interventions in the plenary sessions of the National Assembly and during interrogations conducted by judicial police officers and agents of the National Intelligence Service (SNR), among other charges, he was accused of opposing the late president Pierre Nkurunziza's appointment as Supreme Guide of Patriotism and of accusing him of crimes and accusing the state of persecuting people repatriated from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) by imprisoning them. The same sources stated that he was arrested even though no arrest warrant had been issued against him.

4. Kidnappings

- On the night of Saturday, September 26, 2020 at about 10 p.m., on Rubirizi hill and zone, Mutimbuzi commune of Bujumbura province, three Imbonerakure including the nicknamed Mandela, Hussein and a given Déo, all from Rubirizi zone, accompanied by police officers, arrested two CNL(National Council for Liberty) party militants, Nestor Ndayishimiye known under the nickname of Mashashi and his brother whose name was not identified, after a warrantless search of the victims' homes.

According to witnesses at the scene, although no weapons were found after this search operation, these police officers and militiamen took the arrested persons to the police cells in Rubirizi zone where they presented, against all expectations, a dismantled Kalashnikov-type weapon as evidence against the victims accused of illegal possession of firearms. Subsequently, Nestor Ndayishimiye and his brother were taken out of the cells of Rubirizi zone on Sunday, September 28, 2020, by the pre-named Marcel, head of the National Intelligence Service in Mutimbuzi commune, and taken to an unknown location.

- In the morning of Monday, September 28, 2020, around 11:00 a.m., young Imbonerakure kidnapped the chief of Ndora zone, Bukinyana zone, Cibitoke province, named Sylvestre Mugabonihera, a retired former military and member of the CNL party.

According to witnesses at the scene, Sylvestre Mugabonihera responded to a call from a communal youth leader of Imbonerakure and, as soon as he arrived at the rendezvous point, he was tied up and driven on a motorcycle to a distance of less than one kilometer where a vehicle of the provincial police commissioner of Cibitoke were waiting for him took him to a previously unknown destination.

- On the night of Monday, September 28, 2020, at approximately 7:30 p.m., on Munzenze hill, Rural Kirundo zone, Kirundo commune and province, four police officers led by the provincial head of SNR in Kirundo, Jovith Butoyi, kidnapped from his home the vice-president of the Independent Communal Electoral Commission (CECI) in Kirundo known as Oscar Nahimana, who is also a member of CNL party, and took him aboard his Toyota HILUX-type vehicle to a previously unknown location.

Relatives of the victim indicate that he is a victim of political motives because, during the election period, Oscar Nahimana denounced the shortcomings in the electoral commission of which he was a member.

- In the afternoon of Tuesday, September 29, 2020, around 2:00 pm, Remy Niyonsaba, a teacher at Ruhanza Basic School, Giheta commune in Gitega province, a native of Rutovu commune, was abducted not far from Giheta Communal High School at a place called "Kukirato", by armed men in police uniforms aboard a black Toyota Carina type TI car.

According to sources on the spot, at the time of the abduction, Remy Niyonsaba was waiting for a vehicle that was to take him to his residence in Magarama quarter, in the urban center of Gitega.

SOS Torture Burundi denounces these acts of kidnapping and fears that they could turn into cases of enforced disappearance as the relatives of the victims have so far not had access to the places where their loved ones are being held.

SOS-Torture/Burundi was initiated with the aim of informing national and international opinion on serious human rights violations taking place in Burundi through monitoring reports on torture, arbitrary arrests, enforced 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 December 11 and 12, 2015 by 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 contesting President Nkurunziza's third term of office, namely Musaga, Mutakura, Cibitoke, Nyakabiga, Jabe, the last two being located in the center of the Bujumbura City Hall.