

SOS-TORTURE BURUNDI REPORT N°294 PUBLISHED ON 31 JULY 2021

This report by SOS-Torture Burundi covers the period from 24 to 31 July 2021 regarding cases of human rights violations in Burundi.

At least four (4) people were murdered during the period in different localities of the country and three (3) others were seriously injured, including two members of the National Congress for Liberty (CNL) who were beaten by a group of Imbonerakure in the province of Bubanza, and the other who was wounded by bullets during an ambush by armed men on the RN5 (national road number 5) at the level of the 8th Gihanga transversal in the same province.

The report also deplores the cases of Two (2) people who were victims of arbitrary arrests and six (6) others who were abducted.

1. Violations of the right to life

- On the night of Friday 23 July 2021 at around 7 PM, on the Kidiridiri hill, Murore zone, Busoni commune, in Kirundo province (northern Burundi), a man known as Lazare Bukuru, aged around sixty years, was murdered by people who have not yet been identified.

According to sources on the spot, Mr. Lazare Bukuru, an activist of the CNDD-FDD (National Council for the Defence of Democracy - Forces for the Defence of Democracy), was attacked by a group of four unidentified men, armed with machetes, knives and clubs, who ambushed him as he was returning home at around 7 p.m. The same sources believe that the motive for this assassination is linked to the rift between two rival groups of the CNDD-FDD, on the one hand siding with former deputy Jean-Baptiste Nzigamasabo alias Gihaha, and on the other hand with the national commissioner in charge of ideology within the CNDD-FDD, Colonel

Athanase Manirambona, two men who have been looking at each other in the mirror for some time.

- On the night of Sunday 24 July 2021, at around 7 PM, near Station Kobil, in the quarter of Carama, Kinama zone, Ntahangwa urban commune, in the Bujumbura town hall, an unidentified girl was killed and shot at point blank range by unidentified men who were with her in a vehicle of the brand TI without number plates.

According to sources on the spot, the victim who was working as a maid in one of the households located at the place called "*Ku mayira abiri*" in the same quarter got out of the car with her attacker and they started to fight. In the end, the criminal dropped the girl on the ground and shot her in the head.

- On Monday 19 July 2021, the lifeless body of an unidentified woman was pulled from the Musanzaza river, at the foot of the Buta hill, Gitaba zone, in the commune and province of Rutana (south-east Burundi).

According to sources on the spot, this operation was carried out by agents of the Red Cross in Rutana in collaboration with those of the civil protection police and the body of the victim was buried the same day on the orders of the administration.

The same sources say that after the crime, the perpetrators headed towards the province of Bubanza.

- On the morning of Saturday 24 July 2021, the lifeless body of an unidentified girl in her early twenties was found by local residents in the Ruvyironza river, at the foot of the Rutoke hill, in the commune and province of Gitega (central Burundi).

According to sources on the spot, the young girl was raped before being murdered and thrown into the Ruvyironzar river to erase the traces of the crime. The body of

the victim was evacuated to the morgue of the regional hospital in Gitega while awaiting her identification.

- In the afternoon of Monday 26 July 2021 at around 4.30 PM, a woman known as Déborah Habiyaemye (46 years old) was murdered with a machete on the hill of Runanira III, in the centre of the Kirundo province (northern Burundi).

According to witnesses, the perpetrator of the murder was a certain Jean Marie Nkuzimana (47 years old) who had gone, armed with a machete, to her mother's house where the victim and her husband also lived and to whom he started to hurl insults and death threats. When the victim's husband fled, the assassin rushed at the woman, killing her with several blows of his machete. The motive for the crime is said to be linked to suspicions of witchcraft.

According to the same sources, the perpetrator surrendered to the police while being chased by the population who wanted to lynch him to take justice into their own hands. He is reportedly being held at the Kirundo prosecutor's office for investigation of his criminal case.

SOS-Torture Burundi deplores the impunity that plagues the current government in Burundi, which is the source of numerous human rights violations against peaceful citizens, including violations of the right to life that are not followed by impartial and independent investigations to identify the perpetrators and bring them to justice.

2. Violations of the right to physical integrity

- On the night of Sunday 25 July 2021, at around 9 PM, on the hill Village IV, Buringa zone, Gihanga commune, Bubanza province (north-west of Burundi), two CNL activists named Emmanuel and Aruf were violently beaten by Imbonerakure commanded by Anicet Ntakarutimana, head of the Buringa sector, and Lambert Harerimana, alias Golden, head of the Imbonerakure in this sector.

According to sources on the spot, Emmanuel was admitted to the health centre of village IV in the Buringa sector for treatment because of a broken bone in his leg. The same sources say that the alleged perpetrators have not been worried and that the motive for the violence is linked to the victims' membership of the CNL party.

- On the night of Friday 30 July 2021 at around 8 PM, Beatus Uwambazimana, a driver for the Burundi Cement Company (BUCECO), was seriously injured in an ambush by unidentified armed men on the RN5 at the level of the 8th transversal in the commune of Gihanga in Bubanza province.

According to sources on the spot, armed men shot at a truck, injuring its driver in the arm and left leg.

The same sources say that soldiers from the position of the attack quickly intervened and the assailants retreated to the reserve of Rukoko while the victim was evacuated to a health facility in Bujumbura.

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

- On Saturday, 24 July 2021, on the 13th transversal Maramvya, Maramvya zone, Mutimbuzi commune, in Bujumbura province, a CNL party activist known as Gabriel Ndikuriyo, a native of the same hill was arrested by Imbonerakure on the orders of Gaston Singora, head of the Maramvya zone, who was also cited in the kidnapping and enforced disappearance of Elie Ngomirakiza, the head of the CNL party in Mutimbuzi commune.

According to local sources, Gabriel Ndikuriyo, who was arrested solely on the basis of his political affiliation, was detained at the Maramvya zone police station before being taken to the Rubirizi zone police station the same day by Gaston Singora.

- Since Sunday, 25 July 2017, Dismas Nzosaba, dean of studies at the Mugamba communal high school in Bururi province, has been detained at the National Intelligence Service's dungeon in Bujumbura.

According to witnesses, Dismas Nzosaba was arrested last Friday, 23 July 2021 by Moïse Arakaza, the communal commander of police in Mugamba, who falsely accused him of participating in armed gangs.

The same sources recall that Dismas Nzosaba had also been arrested last June for the same offence and that he was released after paying a heavy 'fine' without receipt. It is worth noting that Moïse Arakaza is regularly accused by the inhabitants of the Mugamba commune of persecuting them on the basis of false allegations of belonging to rebel movements or collaborating with them.

SOS-Torture Burundi calls on the country's authorities to put an end to arbitrary arrests and detentions and to demand that law enforcement officers strictly respect the rules of the code of criminal procedure relating to legal guarantees for people deprived of their liberty.

4. Cases of abduction or enforced disappearance

- On Thursday 22 July 2021, at around 9.30 PM, Pascal Toyi, an activist of the CNL party, a native of the Gitanga hill, Giharo zone and commune, in Rutana province (south-east of Burundi), was abducted from the dungeon of the communal police station in Rutana by the officer in charge of operations (commonly known as G3) at the regional police station in the South region.

According to witnesses, Pascal Toyi had been arrested the same day by police officers at the communal police station before being abducted during the night by the officer in charge of operations who took him away in a Toyota double-cabin vehicle with tinted windows to a destination that is still unknown.

- Early in the morning of Saturday 24 July 2021, a woman known as Monique Nkurunziza, a supervisor at the Bururi High School, was abducted by an agent of the National Intelligence Service (SNR) from her home in the Gisuru quarter, in the town of Bururi province (southern Burundi).

According to local sources, the victim, widow of 1st Sergeant Major Alexis Hakizumukama, a nurse non-commissioned officer who was abducted and reported missing by the late Lieutenant-Colonel Darius Ikurakure, was taken on board the vehicle of the SNR officer in Bururi to an unknown destination.

The same sources state that the motive for the abduction and the place of detention of the victim are not known.

- On the morning of Tuesday 27 July 2021, Serges Sabimpa, a nurse at the Nyakaraye health centre in Nyabihanga commune, Mwaro province, was abducted by unknown persons in a Probox vehicle halfway to his workplace.

According to sources on the ground, men in police uniforms forcibly took him in their vehicle on his way to work and took him to an undisclosed location. Serges Sabimpa is suspected of having given information to the Ministry of Public Health and AIDS Control accusing Dr Nazaire Ndereyimana, the director of Fota Hospital, of embezzling funds from the hospital.

The same sources reveal that his roommate, Jean Claude Majambere, was in turn arrested the next day by SNR agents after being tortured and that he was taken away in their vehicle to an equally unknown destination.

It should be noted that before the abduction of Serges Sabimpa, death threatening leaflets, signed with a red cross and a coffin, incriminating the victim of having denounced Dr Nazaire Ndereyimana and Dr Ezéchiel Nzuwonsaba for embezzling funds from the Fota hospital, had been left at the door of his residence.

- On the morning of Tuesday 27 July 2021, at around 10 AM, a man known as Camarin Mburu (42 years old), from the Kamenge zone, Ntakangwa commune, in the Bujumbura town hall, was abducted by SNR agents from Cibitoke at crossroads 3 Gasenyi in Buganda commune, in the same province of Cibitoke (north-west Burundi).

According to witnesses, Camarin Mburu was tortured, then tied up after his arrest and before being taken on board a vehicle with the number D3984A to an unknown destination.

The same sources reveal that the victim, who had gone to Buganda to visit a friend, was accused by Imbonerakure of collaborating with Burundian rebel groups in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

- Since Wednesday 28 July 2021, Cassien Nihozeko alias Ouattara, a native of Taba hill, Murama zone, Mugamba commune, in Bururi province was abducted by the communal commander of police in the same commune, OPP1 Moïse Arakaza.

According to sources on the spot, Cassien Nishireko had left his home to meet with a certain Désiré known to be an agent of the SNR and, since that day, nobody has seen him again.

The same sources say that Cassien Nihozeko was taken away in a vehicle by Moïse Arakaza alias Nyeganyega, accompanied by SNR agents, to an unknown destination. The victim's family members claim to have searched for him in all the dungeons of the place, but in vain.

SOS-Torture Burundi denounces the resurgence of cases of kidnapping or arrests that look like kidnappings, which occur regularly at a time when officials in power, notably the Head of State, the Attorney General of the Republic, the President of



the National Assembly and the President of the National Assembly, are in the process of being arrested, the President of the National Assembly and the President of the Independent National Commission on Human Rights (CNIDH), publicly indulge in total denial of the existence of the phenomenon of enforced disappearances in Burundi, to the great displeasure of the families of many victims who are still desperately waiting for the reappearance of their loved ones.

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.