

SOS-TORTURE BURUNDI REPORT N°299 PUBLISHED ON 4 SEPTEMBER 2021

This report by SOS-Torture Burundi covers the period from 28 August to 4 September 2021 concerning cases of human rights violations in Burundi.

At least three (3) people were murdered during the period in different localities of the country and five (5) people were seriously injured by Imbonerakure.

The report also deplores the cases of ten (10) people who were victims of arbitrary arrests and one (1) who were abducted by elements of the national police.

1. Violations of the right to life

- On Sunday 29 August 2021, at nightfall, a man known as Karegeya, aged around sixty years, was burnt alive after being severely beaten by neighbors on Butovyi hill in Rutana commune and province (south-east Burundi). According to witnesses, the victim was suspected of superstitious practices on his daughter who had fallen ill, according to the neighbors' beliefs, for refusing to share money that had been collected as part of social assistance during the mourning of his first wife.
- On the morning of Friday 3 September 2021, the lifeless body of a night watchman called Mélance Hakizimana, aged about sixty, was found in front of the paddy rice stock he was securing in the Shatanya III quarter in Gitega town, not far from the Muslims' cemetery.

According to sources on the spot, the cause and perpetrators of his death have not yet been identified. The body of the victim was evacuated to the morgue of the regional hospital of Gitega by civil protection officers.



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- On the morning of Saturday 4 September 2021, the lifeless body of a man known as Nyanzira (55 years old) was found near the Mushara river at the foot of the Mugomati sub-hill, Mbizi hill, Kibago commune, in Makamba province (southern Burundi).

According to sources on the spot, the body was discovered during a search carried out by the police of the Kigabo communal police station, in collaboration with the populations of the locality. According to the victim's family, Nyanzira was last seen on Thursday evening at around 7pm returning from the market called 'Kwa Buhinja' on the border with Tanzania. She believes that he was killed by unknown people who suspected him of having money on him, as a money changer in the locality had commissioned him to change money at this market. The circumstances of his death have not yet been clarified.

2. Violations of the right to physical integrity

- On the night of Sunday 29 August 2021, at around 9 p.m., on the Baganwa hill in the commune of Gitobe, in the province of Kirundo (northern Burundi), a husband and wife CNL activists, Etienne Mushengezi and Valérie Ndirahisha, were ambushed by two young Imbonerakure men armed with machetes and clubs, Claver Misigaro and Valérie Ndirahisha, were ambushed by two young Imbonerakure armed with machetes and clubs, Claver Misigaro and Siboniyo alias Rasta, who beat and seriously wounded them, accusing them of returning late at night and collaborating with criminals.

According to sources on the spot, when the victims cried out for help, some people intervened, including young Imbonerakure from the locality and Jean de Dieu Mpongo, the chief of the sub-hill where the incident was taking place, and asked the torturers to stop beating the couple, but they refused. Thus, the two enraged perpetrators of the ambush started attacking everyone, injuring the chief of the sub-

hill, another Imbonerakure named Yamuremye alias Mvanda as well as another CNL party activist.

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

- Between 28 and 31 August 2021, ten (10) activists of the opposition party CNL (National Congress for Liberty) were arbitrarily arrested at their homes located on Gaharo hill, Rusi zone, Shombo commune, in Karusi province (central-eastern Burundi), by a group of Imbonerakure who took them all to the dungeon of the police communal station in Shombo for their illegal detention. They were Serges Ntirampeba (an elected representative on the hill of Gaharo), Gérard Nduwimana (a teacher), Nestor Ndyabankana, Jean Claude Sindihebura, Placide Ndayizeye, Vianney Nkurunziza, Pélagie Rupiyo, Victor Munobero, Oscar Sabushimike and François Nzoyisaba.

Sources on the ground reveal that these CNL activists had been falsely accused by the communal administration and the Imbonerakure of having held clandestine meetings and set fire to a forest located on the Gihinga mountain chain.

SOS-Torture Burundi denounces the resurgence of political intolerance towards members of opposition parties and the repeated abuses committed with impunity, including arbitrary arrests attributed to the Imbonerakure youth militia affiliated with the ruling CNDD-FDD (National Council for the Defence of Democracy - Forces for the Defence of Democracy), in a country plagued by numerous dysfunctions observed in all sectors of national life that the president himself, Major General Évariste Ndayishimiye, never ceases to deplore in his ill-assorted media statements, without, however, taking appropriate measures to improve the situation.



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4. Case of abduction

- On the evening of Thursday 2 September 2021, a certain Ndizeye was violently beaten and then arrested by the police on Gitaramuka hill, Burambi commune, in Rumonge province (south-west of Burundi). According to witnesses, the victim was taken to the police cell in the same commune in Murago. The same sources reveal that Ndizeye was taken in the morning of Friday 3 September by police officers to his home located on Gitaramuka hill for a search session in order to look for weapons that they did not find. He was transferred in the evening of the same day to an unknown destination.

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.