

SOS-TORTURE BURUNDI REPORT N° 302 PUBLISHED ON 25 SEPTEMBER 2021

This report by SOS-Torture Burundi covers the period from 18 to 25 September 2021 concerning cases of human rights violations in Burundi.

At least nineteen (19) people were murdered during this period and one hundred and thirty (130) others were seriously injured in different localities of the country, most of them were injured in explosions of grenades thrown into a crowd of people in Gitega and Bujumbura City Hall.

The report also deplores the case of one (1) activist of the National Congress for Liberty (CNL) party who was arbitrarily arrested by a group of Imbonerakure.

1. Violations of the right to life

- The lifeless body of Moïse Bucumi, aged 36, was found last Wednesday, 15 September 2021, in a house belonging to a certain Pontien Nahimana on the Munini hill, in the commune and province of Bururi (southern Burundi).

According to witnesses, the body of the victim, a field worker from Ngozi province, had a large wound on the abdomen, traces of blood on his body, his sheets and on the floor as well as on a razor blade found under the bed.

SOS-Torture Burundi calls for an independent and thorough investigation to find the perpetrators of this murder and bring them to justice.

- In the afternoon of Sunday 19 September 2021, two lifeless bodies of men tied together were discovered on the shore of Lake Tanganyika at the foot of the Makombe hill in the Magara zone, Bugarama commune, in Rumonge province

(south-west of Burundi). According to witnesses of the macabre discovery, the two bodies were in such an advanced state of decomposition that it was impossible to recognize them. The same sources indicated that the local administration ordered the burial of the bodies without any prior investigation.

- On the night of Sunday 19 September 2021, a man known as Bernard Inamoya was shot dead with a pistol by an ambush attacker who had been waiting for him as he was returning home, not far from his home on the Gasekanya hill in Gitaramuka commune of Karusi province (central-eastern Burundi). According to sources on the spot, the perpetrator and the motive for the crime remain unknown.
- In the afternoon of Monday 20 September 2021 at around 4 p.m., some fishermen discovered two decomposing bodies of men tied up and wrapped in a sheet, less than a hundred meters from the shore of the Rusizi river, at the foot of the 4th transversal of the Kagazi hill, Rugombo commune, in Cibitoke province (north-west of Burundi).

According to sources on the spot, the Rugombo communal administrator, alerted by soldiers from a position close to the macabre discovery, ordered the Imbonerakure who had accompanied him to immediately bury the bodies of the victims without any procedure for their identification, thus leaving the perpetrators of this double murder immune from any legal proceedings.

SOS-Torture Burundi denounces the endless discoveries of lifeless bodies abandoned on the shores of lakes and rivers, particularly on the shores of the Rusizi river in the communes of Rugombo and Buganda in Cibitoke province. It deplores the inaction of the administrative, police and judicial authorities who do not take any concrete action to curb this recurrent criminal phenomenon that has become intractable.

- On the night of Thursday 23 September 2021, at around 8 p.m., an unidentified man armed with a Kalashnikov rifle and disguised as a woman shot and killed a young pupil named Trésor, aged 15, and wounded his paternal uncle known as Vianney Mugurumoya, alias Kavumbagu, on Butagazwa hill in Mugongo-Manga commune of Bujumbura province (western Burundi).

According to sources on the spot, the criminal entered a bar belonging to a certain Eric and started shooting at local people quenching their thirst. The same sources mentioned that Vianney Mugurumoya had just been released under the presidential pardon for certain prisoners and that the motive for the crime remains to be clarified.

- On the evening of Thursday 23 September 2021 at around 7 p.m., an unidentified man threw a grenade at the home of Lieutenant-Colonel Aaron Ndayishimiye (commander of the 212th battalion operating in the Rukoko wildlife reserve in Bubanza province) located at the 14th Avenue in the Mirango II quarter of the Kamenge zone, in Ntakangwa urban commune, in Bujumbura City Hall (western Burundi).

According to sources on the spot, the explosion of this grenade resulted in the death of Ndayishimiye's wife and her maid, who succumbed to their injuries a few hours later after being evacuated to a health facility in the economic capital. The same sources said that one of the soldiers guarding Lieutenant-Colonel Aaron Ndayishimiye was seriously injured during the grenade attack, whose perpetrator has not been identified.

SOS-Torture Burundi has learned that a journalist from the radio station Bonesha FM, Aimé Richard Niyonkuru, who was investigating the explosion of this grenade, was arrested, ill-treated with slaps, boots and rifle butts, and arbitrarily detained first at the Kamenge police station and then at the municipal police station, before being released after a brief interrogation.

- On the morning of Friday 24 September 2021, five lifeless bodies of unidentified men were discovered on the Ruhembe hill, Bumba zone, Bukinanyana commune, in Cibitoke province (northwestern Burundi).

According to witnesses to the gruesome discovery, the bodies were tied with rope in groups of two and three. The bodies were buried on site in a mass grave on the orders of the Bukinanyana commune administrator without investigation.

- On the evening of Friday 24 September 2021, the lifeless body of a widow known as Francine Bucumi, aged 39, was found in a tea-growing field on the Ruziba hill in Mugina commune of Cibitoke province (north-west of Burundi).

According to sources on the spot, the body of the victim, who had disappeared the day before while she was in a bar belonging to a certain Daniel, had lesions on her head and blood in her ears and eyes.

2. Violations of the right to physical integrity

- On the night of Wednesday 22 September 2021, a group of Imbonerakure led by a certain Donatien seriously wounded a man known as Adonis Misago in his home located on Mubone hill in Kabezi commune of Bujumbura province (western Burundi).

According to sources on the spot, these Imbonerakure injured the victim with stab wounds to the ribs, head and arms. The victim, who is in a critical condition, is currently receiving treatment in a local health facility.

SOS-Torture Burundi calls on the country's authorities to discipline the Imbonerakure militia in order to transform them into ordinary citizens who must also comply with to the rigours of the law like other citizens who are not members of the CNDD-FDD party.

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

- Since the morning of Monday 20 September 2021, Jérémie Niyitunga, the secretary of the CNL party in Muhuta commune, has been arbitrarily detained in the Gitaza zone in the same commune of Rumonge province (south-west of Burundi).

According to local sources, Jérémie Niyitunga was arrested without a warrant by Imbonerakure led by Richard, who accused him of collecting funds and food for rebel fighters while he was distributing to some families in Gitaza notebooks offered by the CNL deputy, Obède Ntakiyiruta, elected in the Rumonge constituency.

The same sources reveal that the first charge was dropped and transformed into a charge of fraud, even though no one had filed a complaint against him for this type of offence.

SOS-Torture Burundi denounces the resurgence of acts of repression and political intolerance by CNDD-FDD militants against opposition party activists and condemns the arbitrary arrests carried out by Imbonerakure militiamen who have no legal standing to deprive people of their liberty.

4. Security facts

- On the night of Sunday 19 September 2021, two people were killed and twenty-five others were injured, some of them seriously, in a grenade attack perpetrated by unidentified persons against a bar located in the town of Gitega, at the junction of the Gitega-Ngozi-Muyinga road, on the Rutegama hill, in the commune and province of Gitega (central Burundi).

According to sources on the spot, in the bar belonging to a police officer named Jules, local residents were celebrating the inauguration of a building used as a hill office. The same sources said that the attack was followed by a wave of arrests and a series of searches carried out by the police, whose toll has not been communicated.

- On the night of Monday 20 September 2021 at around 7p.m., simultaneous explosions of grenades were heard in the economic capital of Bujumbura (western Burundi). According to local sources, at least four grenades were thrown by unidentified individuals, some in the bus park of the old central market of Bujumbura and others in a group of fish sellers near the Jabe market in the Bwiza zone, on 10th Avenue. The official report on the damage caused by these explosions states that two people were killed on the spot and 102 others were injured, some of them seriously.

SOS-Torture Burundi condemns these acts of grenade attacks, which are extremely barbaric, and which were launched on innocent citizens, and calls for impartial investigations in order to discover the perpetrators and bring them to justice.

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.