

SOS-TORTURE BURUNDI REPORT N° 306 PUBLISHED ON 23 OCTOBER 2021

This report by SOS-Torture Burundi covers the period from October 16 to 23, 2021 regarding cases of human rights violations in Burundi.

At least twenty (20) people were murdered during this period in different localities of the country. Most of the bodies of those murdered (at least 14 people) were found on the shores of the Rusizi River separating Burundi from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

The report also deplores the cases of two (2) people who were abducted by unidentified individuals.

1. Violations of the right to life

- In the communes of Rugombo and Buganda of Cibitoke province (north-western Burundi), the phenomenon of lifeless bodies being discovered by farmers and fishermen on the shores of the Rusizi River separating Burundi from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has become both aberrant, intractable and worrying in a country where all the so-called administrative and security structures at the service of the citizen are in place and are paid for by the same unfortunate citizen who helplessly witnesses the dismal scene of the discovery of human bodies, sometimes naked and bloody, sometimes decapitated or with their legs amputated, sometimes tied up and disfigured, most often in decomposition, abandoned in the river or on its shores, in the fields or in the bush. In fact, in just four days, between October 14 and 17, 2021, fourteen (14) lifeless bodies of men and women in a state of decomposition were discovered on the shores of the Rusizi River in the communes of Rugombo and Buganda.

According to witnesses, five lifeless bodies, including those of two women, were found on Sunday, October 17, on the 5th transversal at the foot of Nyamitanga hill in Buganda commune, on the border with Kagwema hill in Gihanga commune of Bubanza province; two bodies were found last Saturday, October 16, in the cassava fields on the 2nd transversal at the foot of Kaburantwa hill in the same Buganda commune; two other bodies were found on Friday, October 15, on the 3rd transversal at the foot of the Gasenyi hill, while three others were discovered on Thursday, October 14, on the 6th transversal at the foot of the Ndava-Village hill in the same commune of Buganda, and two other bodies were seen on the 11th transversal at the foot of the Rusiga hill in the commune of Rugombo.

The same sources indicated that some of the bodies found were tied together and scattered in the fields along the Rusizi River, and that other bodies wrapped in tarpaulins or large bags had been ejected from the Rusizi River, naked and decapitated or with their legs amputated. All of the bodies were buried on the orders of the authorities without investigation, as if these same authorities had a truth about their origin that they did not want to reveal to the public. It is also in a context where the people of these localities claim to see vehicles of the security forces making shuttles in the night towards the Rusizi River and believe that it is these vehicles that bring the bodies found the day after their passage.

SOS-Torture Burundi denounces the lack of will of the authorities to identify the perpetrators of these targeted killings. The fact of burying the bodies discovered in a hurry hardly conceals a devious way to hide the truth and the will to protect the perpetrators of these killings who are well known by these same authorities.

- On Tuesday, October 19, 2021, the decomposing, lifeless body of an unidentified young man was found in the Kinyankonge quarter of the Cibitoke zone in Ntakangwa commune, in the north of Bujumbura city.

According to local sources, the body was that of a young man who had disappeared a few days earlier in the economic capital of Burundi.

- On Wednesday, October 20, 2021, the body of a decapitated man was discovered by farmers in a banana plantation on the Buhina hill, in the Kiyenzi zone, Kanyosha commune, in Bujumbura province (western Burundi).

According to sources on the spot, the body of the victim, who has not been identified, was wrapped in a bag. The same sources specified that local police officers who had been alerted suddenly ordered the burial of the body without investigation.

- On the morning of Friday, October 22, 2021, the lifeless body of Diomède Nkunzimana, aged 34, was discovered by residents of the Mugomere hill in the commune and province of Rumonge (southwestern Burundi).

According to witnesses, the body of the victim, from Nyarusange commune in Gitega province, was lying on the edge of the Rumonge-Buyengero road and the circumstances of his death have not been clarified.

- On Friday, October 22, 2021, the lifeless body of an unidentified young man in his twenties was discovered on the Bigoma hill in the Muyira zone of Kanyosha commune, in Bujumbura province (western Burundi).

According to witnesses to the gruesome discovery, the body of the victim, wearing jeans and a yellow T-shirt, had stab wounds to the throat and was lying in a cassava field near a runoff gutter. The same sources affirm that the local administration proceeded on the same day at around 2 p.m. to the burial of the body without investigation.

- On the morning of Saturday, October 23, 2021, two lifeless bodies of men were found in the sectors of Munyika I and Mparambo II of the Rugombo commune, in Cibitoke province (northwest Burundi).

According to witnesses, the first body found in the Munyika I sector was identified as that of a man known as Eric Niyonkuru, who was described as a recidivist thief. His body was found bound with wounds. The second body was that of an unidentified elderly man (in his eighties) who was discovered on Mparambo II hill in the same commune of Rugombo.

The same sources suspect that young Imbonerakure affiliated with the ruling CNDD-FDD (National Council for the Defense of Democracy-Forces for the Defense of Democracy) are the perpetrators of the double murder.

SOS-Torture Burundi urges the police and judicial structures to conduct an investigation to identify the perpetrators of this double murder. It calls on the country's authorities to put the Imbonerakure in their rightful place as citizens, given that, as a result of the complicity and support they receive from CNDD-FDD officials, the Imbonerakure now consider themselves above the law and above other Burundian citizens.

2. Cases of abduction or enforced disappearance

- In the afternoon of Monday, October 18, 2021, around 2:00 p.m., a businessman known as Jean Berchmans Nduwayo, alias DJuma, from the main town of Ruyigi province (eastern Burundi), was abducted by unknown individuals who were waiting for him in a vehicle parked near his home in the Kinyabakecuru quarter of the same town.

According to sources on the spot, these unidentified individuals abducted him in a vehicle parked near his home as he was heading to his place of work.

The victim's relatives claim to have searched for him in various police dungeons without success.

- On the night of Saturday, October 23, 2021, unidentified armed agents abducted Gaspard Havyarimana in a TI car with the license plate D4527A in the provincial town of Kayanza (northern Burundi). Sources on the spot said that the victim worked in a veterinary pharmacy located in the same place where he was kidnapped.

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.