

## **SOS-TORTURE BURUNDI REPORT N° 315 PUBLISHED ON 25 DECEMBER 2021**

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

At least six (6) people were assassinated during this period in different localities of the country, including a leader of the CNL (National Congress for Freedom) party who died at the Prince Louis Rwagasore Clinic following horrific acts of torture at the SNR (National Intelligence Service) and three people who died in a grenade explosion in Bujumbura in which fourteen (14) others were injured.

### **1. Violations of the right to life**

- On the morning of Sunday, 19 December 2021, at around 8 a.m., the lifeless body of an unidentified man was discovered lying in a pool of blood in a field located on the shore of the Rusizi River, at the 12th crossroads at the foot of the Rusiga hill, in the Cibitoke zone, Rugombo commune, in the Cibitoke province (northwestern Burundi).

According to witnesses of the macabre discovery, passers-by saw the naked body of the victim lying in a pool of still fresh blood and showing several gaping wounds due to the atrocious blows of knives and clubs received all over his body.

The same sources said that the identity of the victim and the perpetrators of the crime as well as its circumstances have not been determined but that the head of zone of Cibitoke, sent by the communal administrator, ordered young Imbonerakure of the CNDD-FDD (National Council for the Defence of Democracy-Forces for the Defence of Democracy) party who came with him to bury the body immediately without any preliminary investigation. However, local residents suspect that the provincial head of the SNR (National Intelligence Service) in Cibitoke province was

behind the man's murder because they saw his vehicle and four police officers on board making suspicious movements at the place where the body was found before storming off again after a lapse of time.

SOS-Torture Burundi calls for a serious investigation to discover the perpetrators of the lifeless bodies abandoned and discovered regularly in the province of Cibitoke, especially in and on the shores of the Rusizi River and denounces the attitude of the administrative authorities who hasten to order the burial of the bodies each time they are discovered on the shores of the Rusizi River instead of demanding meticulous investigations in order to identify and punish the perpetrators of such infamous crimes.

- On the night of Friday 3 December 2021, Innocent Barutwanayo, an activist of the CNL (National Congress for Freedom) party in Matongo commune of Kayanza province (northern Burundi), died as a result of atrocious acts of torture suffered at the SNR a few days after his transfer to the Prince Louis Rwagasore Clinic.

According to local sources, on 16 November 2021, a little more than two weeks before his death, Innocent Barutwanayo was arrested at his home on the Kivumu hill, in Matongo commune of Kayanza province, by an OPJ (judicial police officer) named Gilbert, accompanied by James Niyitunga (president of the Imbonerakure youth league in Matongo commune) and the leader of the hill and of the Imbonerakure on the same hill. After a search session at Innocent Barutwanayo's home, the OPJ ordered him to follow them after having told him that he was being questioned in the context of an investigation into suspected collaboration with armed gangs, although no compromising objects were found. He spent his first night in the dungeon of the police station in Matongo before being dragged out the next day by the provincial intelligence officer in Kayanza, OPC2 Léonard Ngendakumana (OPN 1266), who took him to his office for excruciating torture sessions. According to witnesses, Innocent Barutwanayo was violently beaten with

concrete iron and wire to extract a confession from him about his alleged collaboration with the assailants and his refusal to join the CNDD-FDD party.

After four days of torture, Innocent Barutwanayo was evacuated on 20 November in a very critical state to the hospital in Kayanza, from where he was transferred on 26 November without having recovered to the SNR headquarters in Bujumbura for further torture sessions. On 4 December 2021, the victim's family received the bad news of his death from the administrator of Matongo commune, Alice Nsabiyumva, who asked them to go to Bujumbura to recover the body.

SOS-Torture Burundi urges the Burundian authorities, in this case the Head of State Évariste Ndayishimiye, to put an end to the serious human rights violations committed repeatedly within the SNR, which is becoming a real torture centre in Burundi. It demands an independent investigation to arrest and punish in accordance with the law all SNR agents involved in acts of torture or similar violations.

- On 22 December 2021, the lifeless body of Joseph Nyandwi, aged 60, was found hanged with a rope under an avocado tree not far from his home on the Mugano hill in Buraza commune of Gitega province (central Burundi).

According to local sources, the circumstances of the death of this 60-year-old are still unclear and some local residents believe that Joseph Nyandwi was killed elsewhere and that his body was hung to simulate suicide.

- On the night of Wednesday 23 December 2021 at around 8 p.m., an unidentified criminal detonated a grenade in a cinema located between the 3rd and 4th avenues of the Bwiza zone, in Mukaza commune of Bujumbura town hall (western Burundi).

According to witnesses, three people were killed immediately and 14 others were seriously injured in the explosion. The same sources specify that the victims were



evacuated covered with tarpaulins in police pick-up vans and that no ambulance was sent to help the injured.

SOS-Torture Burundi calls on the judicial authorities to conduct an impartial investigation to identify the perpetrators of this crime and bring them to justice. It urgently appeals to the government in place to proceed with the disarmament of the civilian population, including the young Imbonerakure affiliated to the CNDD-FDD who seem to have a de facto right to carry arms in an obvious manner.

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.