

SOS-TORTURE BURUNDI REPORT N° 317 PUBLISHED ON 8 JANUARY 2022

This report by SOS-Torture Burundi covers the period from 1 to 8 January 2022 concerning cases of human rights violations in Burundi.

At least three (3) people were murdered during this period in different localities of the country.

The report also deplores the case of one (1) young activist of the UPD-Zigamibanga party who was abducted by Imbonerakure in the provincial capital of Ngozi when he had just repatriated from Rwanda.

1. Violations of the right to life

- On the morning of Monday 3 January 2022, at around 10 a.m., the lifeless body of a woman known as Eugénie Ntakirutimana, aged 67, was found in a hotel room called "Centre Porta Sion" located in the Gikungu rural quarter of the Gihosha zone, in Ntakangwa commune, in northern economic capital of Bujumbura (western Burundi). The circumstances of her death as well as the perpetrators of the crime remain unknown.

According to witnesses, employees of this hotel were alerted by a foul smell emanating from an occupied room that had remained closed since 31 December 2021 and notified the administration and the police. The police had to break down the door of the room to discover the decomposing body of the victim lying in a shower, her arms and legs tied with a cloth rope while her head was wrapped in another cloth. In addition, her bags were open and her belongings scattered around the room, where the police did not identify any signs of forced entry.

The same sources reported that Eugénie Ntakirutimana, a native of Musama hill in Butaganzwa commune of Kayanza province (northern Burundi), had been living in Belgium for several years and had arrived on 12 December 2021 to spend her end-of-year holidays in Burundi.

SOS-Torture Burundi calls for an impartial judicial investigation to identify the perpetrators of the murder and bring them to justice.

- On the afternoon of Monday 3 January 2022, Timothée Niyonkuru, a 50-year-old CNDD-FDD (National Council for the Defence of Democracy-Forces for the Defence of Democracy) party activist, was stabbed to death by a young Imbonerakure named Ignace Butoyi, at the 2nd transversal on Ruhagarika hill, in Buganda commune of Cibitoke province (north-western Burundi).

According to witnesses, the young Imbonerakure Ignace Butoyi is part of a large group of other young Imbonerakure who have the habit of stealing after committing murders on passengers who are going to or coming from the DRC by crossing the Rusizi river separating the two neighbouring countries and that the members of that group are well known and cannot be challenged because they are protected by some authorities of that country.

- On the night of Monday 3 January 2022 at around 9 p.m., a man known as Prosper Kubwimana alias Toto, aged 39, was killed with machetes on Bugera hill in Ndava commune of Mwaro province (central Burundi).

According to local sources, Prosper Kubwimana was allegedly killed in a potato field on the same hill.

2. Cases of abduction or enforced disappearance

- On 1 January 2022, Pascal Coyitungiye, a native of the Kinyami quarter in the commune and province of Ngozi (northern Burundi) and an activist of the UPD (Union for Peace and Development) party, was abducted by Imbonerakure militiamen, in complicity with the provincial head of the SNR, in the capital of this province and driven to an unknown destination in an unregistered white Toyota TI car with tinted windows.

According to witnesses, Pascal Coyitungiye, aged 24, who had just returned the day before (31 December 2021) from Rwanda where he had taken refuge since 2017, was seen near the "Ku Gasaka" stadium with Musafiri Niyonkuru, the provincial leader of the Imbonerakure militia in Ngozi, in the company of two other Imbonerakure named Paul and Gilbert, who were providing him with security. The same source said that these Imbonerakure were seen on the same day in the vehicle of Salvator Horihoze, the provincial SNR leader in Ngozi. The family of Pascal Coyitungiye searched for him in all the dungeons of Ngozi without success.

SOS-Torture Burundi notes that Salvator Horihoze and Musafiri Niyonkuru are cited in several cases of human rights violations, including abductions and enforced disappearances.

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.