

## **SOS-TORTURE BURUNDI REPORT N° 319 PUBLISHED ON 22 JANUARY 2022**

This report by SOS-Torture Burundi covers the period from 15 to 22 January 2022 concerning cases of human rights violations in Burundi.

The report also deplores the cases of two (2) people who were arbitrarily arrested respectively by the head of the SNR (National Intelligence Service) in Rumonge province and the governor of Rutana province and of one (1) prisoner who was tortured by his peer in Ngozi prison.

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

- On the morning of Wednesday 19 January 2022, the lifeless body of an employee at a bus station known as Fulgence Niyonkuru, aged 39, was found in one of the rooms of the Shawala Guest House hotel located in the Musinzira quarter of Gitega town (central Burundi).

According to local sources, Fulgence Niyonkuru, a native of the Nyamugari quarter of the same town, was murdered by individuals who have not yet been identified, as loud cries from his room were heard around midnight the previous day. However, his executioners took care to leave some medicines next to the body of the victim to simulate a natural death due to an illness from which he would suffer.

The same sources reveal that Fulgence Niyonkuru had been spending the night at this hotel since January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2022 because of a disagreement with his wife over a piece of land.

SOS-Torture Burundi calls for an impartial judicial investigation to determine the circumstances and the perpetrators of the crime.

- On Wednesday 19 January 2022, a 31-year-old mason known as Diomède Kwizera was killed by a group of Imbonerakure led by their local leader, Rayon alias Kanefu, in the locality of Businde on the 15th transversal of the Maramvya zone, Mutimbuzi commune, in the province of Bujumbura (western Burundi).

According to local sources, in the middle of the construction of a house on this hill, a group of Imbonerakure attacked the masons who immediately fled; but, unfortunately, Diomède Kwizera did not have the chance to escape. They were able to catch up with him and beat him violently until he died.

According to the same sources, the leader of the Imbonerakure on the 15th transversal, Rayon alias Kanefu, was in conflict with the owner of this house under construction over a sum of money that he had demanded from him in vain, which is said to have been the cause of this aggression committed with the aim of paralysing the activities.

- On the morning of Thursday 20 January 2022, the lifeless body of a policeman of the non-commissioned officer category, BPC2 Pierre Minani, was found lying on the edge of a path on the hill of Kibogoye in the commune of Itaba, in the province of Gitega (central Burundi). The circumstances and motive for the crime have not yet been identified.

According to witnesses, Pierre Minani was savagely killed with a machete as his body showed gaping wounds on the head with fresh blood running down his face. The same sources state that the policeman was in charge of logistics at the Itaba police station.

## **2. Violations of the right to physical integrity (cases of torture)**

- In the evening of 16 January 2022, a prisoner named Ezéchiel Nduwayo incarcerated in the central prison of Ngozi (northern Burundi) was tortured by Victor Niyonkuru, one of the prisoners in charge of the security cell (commonly known as Kapita) and a member of the Imbonerakure youth league affiliated to the CNDD-FDD (National Council for the Defence of Democracy-Forces for the Defence of Democracy) party.

According to witnesses, the torture took place in a correctional cell after the torturer advised the police officers guarding the cell and the prison director not to intervene following the victim's cries of distress. The same sources claim that Victor Niyonkuru was not worried even though the prison authority was informed of the case.

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

- On Monday 17 January 2022, Samuel Manirakiza, a teacher at the Basic Islamic School located in the Swahili quarter in the capital of Rumonge province (south-western Burundi), was arbitrarily arrested by the provincial head of the National Intelligence Service (SNR) in this province, who took him to the dungeon of the provincial police station in Rumonge.

According to local sources, Samuel Manirakiza was accused of having distributed an audio recording via social networks in which he criticised the organisation of a level test for teachers only, whereas, according to him, such a test should concern all civil servants, starting with the country's senior authorities.

SOS-Torture Burundi has learned that the Special Coalition of Teachers' Unions for National Solidarity (Cossesona) and the government of Burundi have reached an agreement, under the mediation of the president of the National Committee for

Social Dialogue (CNDS), to suspend the test in order to avoid a general strike movement that was announced by the unions on the 14th of this month.

- On 21 January 2022, a retired military officer of the ex-FAB (Burundian Armed Forces) known as Tharcisse Kurumvune (67 years old) was arbitrarily arrested in the urban centre of Rutana (south-east of Burundi) by the governor of the province, Olivier Nibitanga, and transferred manu militari to the central prison of Rutana.

According to witnesses, the sixty-year-old was accused of being a broker after being tricked by an individual who had just shown him a house to rent.

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.