

SOS-TORTURE BURUNDI REPORT N° 320 PUBLISHED ON 29 JANUARY 2022

This report by SOS-Torture Burundi covers the period from 22 to 29 January 2022 concerning cases of human rights violations in Burundi.

At least five (5) people were murdered and four (4) others were injured during this period in different localities of the country.

The report also deplores the cases of four (4) people who were arbitrarily arrested and detained in Gitega province and in Bujumbura city.

1. Violations of the right to life

- On the evening of Saturday 22 January 2022, two unidentified criminals, armed with a Kalashnikov and a pistol, burst into a bar called Peacock (commonly known as Kumatete) located in Kabondo quarter, Rohero zone, Mukaza commune, in Bujumbura city (western Burundi) and fired several bullets at close range at a man known as Arnaud Mfuranzima who was seriously injured in the head and back and died on the morning of Monday 24 January 2022.

According to eyewitnesses of the horrific scene, Arnaud Mfuranzima was having a drink with friends when these criminals opened fire on him alone after ordering the other occupants to lie down on the ground. They immediately stole phones and money before leaving the place.

The same sources said that the victim was evacuated to Kira hospital for treatment where he underwent several operations in vain and that he finally succumbed to his injuries two days later.

SOS-Torture Burundi deplores the fact that targeted killings continue to plunge peaceful families into mourning and demands thorough and impartial investigations to identify the perpetrators and the motive behind this despicable crime.

- On the night of Tuesday 25 January 2022, a young Imbonerakure known as Claude Bizimana, aged 32, was killed with sticks and clubs by the angry population after he was caught stealing a cow from a household located on the Buhayira hill in Murwi commune, Cibitoke province (north-west Burundi).
- On 26 January 2022, a young Imbonerakure named Etienne Niyonkuru (30 years old) was killed with sticks and clubs by an enraged population after being caught inside a house in the capital of Buganda commune in Cibitoke province.

According to witnesses, Etienne Niyonkuru was caught in possession of several forged keys and equipment enabling him to break into houses.

- On the evening of Friday 28 January 2022, a young Imbonerakure named Côme Mpawenayo, aged 29, was killed with sticks and clubs by night watchmen who caught him stealing maize from a field for which they had been assigned to look after its safety on Munyika I hill in Rugombo commune of Cibitoke province.

SOS-Torture Burundi deplores the fact that this feeling of popular justice is based on the impunity enjoyed by the Imbonerakure militia, which necessarily generates a strong feeling of revolt and anger at the inaction of the judiciary.

- On the afternoon of Friday 28 January 2022 at around 1.30 pm, a soldier known as Dieudonné Ndayizeye shot and killed a shopkeeper known as Pacifique Ndayishimiye (40 years old) in Gitwa quarter of Gihinga hill, in Kayokwe commune, in the capital of Mwaro province (central Burundi).

According to witnesses, the young soldier had come to court, during duty hours, a young girl who works at the restaurant of Pacifique Ndayishimiye who advised him to come and pick her up after duty hours. However, Dieudonné Ndayizeye did not welcome the advice and immediately fired three bullets at the heart of the shopkeeper who succumbed to his injuries after being evacuated to Kibumbu hospital.

The same sources added that Dieudonné Ndayizeye, who was providing security at the residence of the Vice-President of the Republic, Prosper Bazombanza, located in Mwaro city, committed suicide by shooting himself and died immediately.

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

- On the night of Saturday 22 January 2022, at around midnight, a group of unidentified criminals armed with machetes and clubs attacked a household in Ruvumu quarter on Shari 2 hill in Bubanza province (north-western Burundi) and seriously injured a woman called Sophie Nindorera and her daughter Emelyne Uwikunze.

According to local sources, the perpetrators found the victims in their house and violently beat and injured them with machetes to the head after extorting money from them. The victims were evacuated to Bubanza hospital for medical treatment while the robbers fled after the victims' cries for help.

According to the same sources, the residents of Ruvumu believe that these criminals are part of a group of Imbonerakure who make nightly rounds in the locality under the command of the Imbonerakure leader of Ruvumu, Christophe Ntunzwenimana.

- On the night of Tuesday to Wednesday, 26 January 2022, at around 2 a.m., unidentified individuals armed with guns attacked a group of Imbonerakure on their nightly rounds on Saswe hill in Kayokwe commune of Mwaro province (central Burundi) and seriously injured one of them, Bosco Nkengurukiyimana, in the thigh.

According to the same sources, Bosco Nkengurukiyimana was evacuated to Kibumbu hospital for medical treatment, but no suspects have been arrested for the moment.

- On the night of Thursday 27 January 2022, at around midnight, a group of Imbonerakure seriously injured a man known as Léonidas Ugirasebuja, 55 years old, with machetes at his home on Rukindo hill, in Kiyonza zone, Bugabira commune, in Kirundo province (northern Burundi).

According to witnesses, Imbonerakure burst into the home of Léonidas Ugirasebuja at around midnight, forced open a door while the occupants were asleep and entered the house. They forced out all the occupants before attacking the victim with machetes and leaving him for dead when they left. Neighbours evacuated the victim the next morning to Ruhehe health centre before he was later referred to Kirundo hospital.

Local sources reveal that Léonidas Ugirasebuja was victim of a plot by the Imbonerakure of the locality who suspected him of having bewitched one of their own, a certain Janvier Murenzi (27 years old) who had been caught up in agitations considered by these Imbonerakure as a bad fate cast on him by the victim, especially since the young man had left the house running while heading towards his home.

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

- Since 14 January 2022, three members of the UCEDD association (Christian Union for the Education and Development of the Disadvantaged) from the Batwa community, namely Sylvestre Nyawenda, Ignace Ndirariha and Isaïe Ndayirukiye, have been arbitrarily detained in the dungeon of the police station in Gitega (central Burundi).

According to witnesses, they were arrested on Bitare hill in Bugendana commune of Gitega province after being accused without evidence of holding a clandestine meeting aimed at destabilising the activities of the UCEDD association and were taken manu militari to the police detention centre in Bugendana before being transferred 5 days later (19 January 2022) to the provincial police station in Gitega, where they remain arbitrarily detained to this day.

The same sources reveal that these arrests and arbitrary detentions are part of a leadership conflict related to the mismanagement of the association's funds where its founder, Innocent Mahwikizi, has been detained in the central prison of Gitega since 23 July 2021 for denouncing the mismanagement and embezzlement of UCEDD funds.

SOS-Torture Burundi denounces the arbitrary arrests and detentions of UCEDD members who are protesting against the mismanagement and embezzlement of the association's funds, and condemns the instrumental attitude of the police, who interfere in the internal functioning of an association governed by its statutes and internal regulations, and consequently report non-existent offences.

- On the afternoon of Thursday 27 January 2022, a journalist-reporter from Bonesha FM was arrested and detained at the Special Research Bureau (BSR) by the police while reporting on a fire that broke out in the police station. According to witnesses, he was accused of entering the BSR without showing his press card.



SOS – Torture/Burundi

Monitoring sur les cas de torture, les arrestations arbitraires, les disparitions forcées et les exécutions sommaires au Burundi

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.