

SOS-TORTURE BURUNDI REPORT N° 323 PUBLISHED ON 19 FEBRUARY 2022

This report by SOS-Torture Burundi covers the period from 12 to 19 February 2022 concerning cases of human rights violations in Burundi.

At least fifteen (15) people were murdered during this period in different localities of the country.

The report also deplores the case of one (1) young CNL party activist who was abducted by the head of the Imbonerakure in Ngozi province.

1. Violations of the right to life

- On the afternoon of Saturday 12 February 2022, at around 3 p.m., eleven (11) lifeless bodies of men in Burundian army uniforms were discovered on the shore of the Rusizi River on the 12th transversal, at the foot of the Rusiga hill of the Rugombo commune, in Cibitoke province (north-west of Burundi).

According to witnesses, it was fishermen who first saw the bodies and then alerted the administrative officials who sent Imbonerakure and soldiers to verify the information. When they arrived at the scene of the macabre discovery, they dispersed all the residents and anyone who tried to approach them. Later, the bodies were taken away in a truck of the Burundian National Defence Force (FDNB) towards the economic capital Bujumbura.

According to the same sources, the circumstances in which these soldiers died remain a mystery at a time when the surrounding population confirms that several soldiers had crossed the Rusizi River during the night of 7 to 8 February 2022, at Kigazura locality on the 6th transversal of the Kigazi hill, coming from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

- On 11 February 2022, a CNDD-FDD (National Council for the Defence of Democracy-Forces for the Defence of Democracy) activist named Révérien Butoyi died in Giheta hospital following the injuries inflicted on him the previous day by a group of other Imbonerakure on Kibande hill in the same commune of Giheta, in Gitega province (central Burundi).

According to witnesses, on the evening of last Thursday 10 February, Révérien had jokingly taken a sip of beer from a bottle of banana wine belonging to one of the Imbonerakure in a local bistro. Before he had even swallowed the drink, all his comrades violently jumped on him and beat him several times until he fainted. He was evacuated the same night in a very critical state to the hospital of Giheta where he succumbed to his injuries the following day.

The same sources said that all the alleged perpetrators of the crime remain free and are not worried about anything, although the crime was committed in a public place, in the presence of eyewitnesses.

SOS-Torture Burundi deplores the fact that the recurrent criminality attributable to certain CNDD-FDD militants, in this case the members of the Imbonerakure youth league, is based on a feeling of immunity that they claim to have as a result of the almost general impunity that has surrounded all the abuses committed since the time of the rebellion.

- On the evening of Sunday 13 February 2022 at around 6 p.m., Charlotte Igiraneza, a 25-year-old mother of three, was stabbed to death by her husband, Bosco Kamaro, on Gahwazi I hill of Mpanda commune, in Bubanza province (western Burundi).

According to local sources, Bosco Kamaro, 27 years old and a member of the Imbonerakure youth league affiliated to the ruling CNDD-FDD party, stabbed his

wife, who died immediately. The motive for the crime was allegedly linked to a land dispute where the victim had opposed the sale of a family property.

According to the same source, Bosco Kamaro was arrested by the police and taken to the local police station in Mpanda for a judicial investigation. He was subsequently tried on Friday 18 February in flagrante delicto by the Bubanza high court and sentenced to 20 years' imprisonment on confession of guilt.

- On the evening of Wednesday 16 February 2022, the lifeless body of a young girl named Xavérienne Ningabiye, aged 19 and native of Cuba hill, Bugenyuzi commune, in Karusi province (central-eastern Burundi), was retrieved from the Ndurumu River separating Bugenyuzi and Buhiga communes, a few kilometres from the chief town of Karusi province.

According to witnesses, the arms and legs of the victim, who was found naked, were tied together behind her back with a rope. The same sources believe that, given the state of the body at the time of discovery, Xavérienne Ningabiye had been raped and then strangled before throwing her body into the river to disguise the crime. A relative who was able to identify the victim's body said that the girl had been missing since 10 February.

- In the afternoon of Friday, February 18, 2022, the decomposing body of a girl named Divine Kezakimana, a 7-year-old pupil at the Karusi III Basic School, was discovered in the capital of Karusi province (central-eastern Burundi).

According to witnesses of the macabre discovery, shepherds found the body of the victim in a small bush near the communal directorate of education in Buhiga, with her arms and legs tied together by a rope.

The same sources reported that Divine Kezakimana lived with her parents in the Buhiga camp for displaced persons and had been missing since February 11 after

leaving school at around 11 a.m. Her parents had searched for her everywhere, but in vain.

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

2. Cases of abduction or enforced disappearance

For more than a week, a young activist of the CNL party (National Congress for Freedom) known as Jean Claude Nzigamyé has been missing after being kidnapped on 7 February 2022 by Msafiri Niyonkuru, the head of the Imbonerakure in Ngozi province (northern Burundi).

According to witnesses, Jean Claude Nzigamyé, a native of the Makaba hill and zone, in Ngozi commune and province, was abducted in the centre of Ngozi by a group of men in civilian clothes armed with pistols, led by Msafiri Niyonkuru, and was taken away in a TI-type car with tinted windows to an unknown destination. His relatives claim to have searched for him in all the dungeons in Ngozi province, but without success.



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 city.