

SOS-TORTURE BURUNDI REPORT N° 324 PUBLISHED ON 26 FEBRUARY 2022

This report by SOS-Torture Burundi covers the period from 19 to 26 February 2022 concerning cases of human rights violations in Burundi.

At least two (2) people were murdered during this period in different localities in the country.

The report also deplores the cases of seven (7) people who were injured in a grenade explosion triggered by an Imbonerakure in Cibitoke province and of one (1) man who was arbitrarily arrested in Bujumbura city.

1. Violations of the right to life

- On the morning of Monday 21 February 2021, the lifeless body of an unidentified girl was discovered by passers-by lying in a bush near the Gikoma River, on Bugarama hill and zone, in Muramvya commune and province (central Burundi).

According to witnesses of the macabre discovery, the body of the victim was naked, which suggests that her killers had raped her before strangling her.

- On the night of Monday 21 February 2022 at around 8 p.m., a man called Charles Hatungimana, aged 55, was stabbed to death by a pork kebab seller named Balthazar on Rusosoro hill, in Rugombo commune of Cibitoke province (northwestern Burundi).

According to witnesses, Charles Hatungimana owed Balthazar five hundred Burundian francs (500 Fbu) for a pork skewer taken during the day and when Balthazar asked him to pay, the debtor replied that he had no money. He then stabbed him in the ribs and the debtor died immediately.

The same sources said that the perpetrator tried to flee afterwards but was caught by angry residents who wanted to seek revenge had it not been for the rapid intervention of the police, who apprehended the perpetrator for legal proceedings.

2. Violations of the right to physical integrity

- In the afternoon of Tuesday 22 February 2022, at around 4 p.m., seven people were seriously injured in a grenade explosion on Gasenyi hill, in Buganda commune of Cibitoke province (north-west of Burundi).

According to witnesses, the perpetrator of the grenade explosion was an Imbonerakure (a youth league affiliated to the National Council for the Defence of Democracy-Forces for the Defence of Democracy [CNDD-FDD]) known as Laurent Isaac Nimbona, who wanted to take revenge on his neighbour, Kwizera Bahati, whom he accused of stealing maize from him, which he had displayed in the sun in the courtyard of his home. After a moment of quarrelling, Laurent Isaac Nimbona angrily went back to his house and took a grenade which he immediately exploded. As a result, seven people were seriously injured, including the perpetrator, who was wounded in the chest and evacuated to the Cibitoke hospital for treatment. Two children were identified among the injured, including Enoch Nsengiyumva, aged 11, who was wounded in the arm and taken to the Ruhagarika dispensary on the Gasenyi hill, and Carine Uwingabire, aged 9, who was wounded in the ribs and evacuated to the Ubuntu clinic for medical care.

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

In the afternoon of Tuesday 22 February 2022 at around 1 p.m., a man named Ferdinand alias Kabizi, a native of Mugongo zone of Mugongo-Manga commune, in Bujumbura province, was arbitrarily arrested in the form of kidnapping by unidentified individuals on the Republic Bridge located on the boulevard of Mwezi

Gisabo (formerly called the boulevard of 28 November) in the Mutanga-Nord quarter, Gihosha zone, Ntahangwa commune, in Bujumbura city (west of Burundi).

According to local sources, Ferdinand was called by a person asking him to meet him at the Republic Bridge and, when he left to meet the person, he did not return. He worked in a cabaret in Nyakabiga zone and lived on 9th Avenue in Nyakabiga III quarter in the same zone.

According to the same source, Ferdinand called one of his neighbours after his abduction and informed him that his kidnappers were taking him to the dungeon in Gihosha zone where he is still being held with no information about the reasons for his arrest.

SOS-Torture Burundi strongly condemns the violation of the substantive and procedural rules for the protection of individual freedom contained in the Criminal Procedure Code in force in Burundi and calls on the judicial and police authorities to ensure strict compliance with the rules of the Criminal Procedure Code relating to the conduct of judicial investigations and more particularly to the deprivation of freedom.

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.