

SOS-TORTURE BURUNDI REPORT N° 326 PUBLISHED ON 12 MARCH 2022

This report by SOS-Torture Burundi covers the period from 5 to 12 March 2022 regarding cases of human rights violations in Burundi.

At least seven (7) people were murdered during this period in different parts of the country.

1. Violations of the right to life

- On the night of Saturday 6 March 2022 at around 9 p.m., a young woman named Emelyne Misago, aged 30, from the Rabiho hill, Bibara zone, Mutumba commune, in the province of Karusi (central-eastern Burundi), was killed with a machete as she was returning to her home on the same hill. Her body was discovered in a banana plantation the next morning by passers-by.

According to witnesses to the gruesome discovery, the pregnant victim was hit several times in the head and neck.

The same sources revealed that the police arrested a certain Innocent Kubwimana, known in the locality as her sexual partner and suspected of having impregnated the victim, and took him to the dungeon of the Mutumba police station for investigation.

- On the morning of Sunday 6 March 2022, the lifeless body of a woman known as Francine Nzimenya, aged about thirty, was found at her home located at 1st avenue no. 46 in Nyamugari quarter of Gitega city (central Burundi).

According to witnesses to the gruesome discovery, Francine Nzimenya's body was lying in a pool of blood and her killer had struck her in the head with a club.

The motives and circumstances of the murder remain unclear, while the perpetrators remain unknown.

SOS-Torture Burundi deplores the upsurge in cases of gender-based violence which is becoming increasingly worrying throughout the country and regrets that ten (10) women were murdered in a period of one month alone, including seven (7) women who were murdered after being raped by their murderers, notably in the provinces of Bubanza, Karusi, Muramvya and Bururi.

- On the morning of Sunday 6 March 2022, the decomposing body of a young single man named Déo was discovered in the Kinyankonge River in the Buterere zone, Ntakangwa commune of Bujumbura city (western Burundi).

According to local sources, Mr. Déo was a fourth grade teacher at Buterere II Basic School (ECOFO) located in the Kiyange quarter and had disappeared since Friday of last week when he went to Bujumbura city to withdraw money from a loan he had taken out in one of the banks in the economic capital.

SOS-Torture Burundi calls for a thorough and impartial investigation to identify the perpetrators and bring them to justice.

- On the night of Sunday 6 March 2022 at around 11 pm, a man named Toyi was murdered with a dagger on the Musasa hill, Bigina zone, Kayogoro commune, in Makamba province (southern Burundi) and his body was found near the cemetery located on the same hill.

According to local sources, four persons are under interrogation at the police station in Kayogoro in connection with the murder.

- On the morning of Friday 11 March 2022, at around 11 a.m., three decomposing bodies of two men and a woman tied together were discovered by farmers in a cassava field on the 7th transversal of the Kaburantwa hill in Buganda commune of Cibitoke province (north-west Burundi). The victims have not been identified by the local population, who believe that they were killed elsewhere and that their bodies were brought to this place to be dumped.

According to witnesses to this dismal discovery, the farmers were alerted by flies and a foul smell less than three hundred metres from the houses and quickly informed the local administration and the police, who directly sent a judicial police officer and Red Cross agents to make a report and disinfect the crime scene.

The same sources specify that the administration gave the order to directly bury the bodies without proceeding to the identification of the victims and suspect the provincial head of the National Intelligence Service (SNR) in Cibitoke to be behind this triple murder since the residents of the crime scene noticed suspicious movements of his vehicle during the night at the place where the bodies were discovered.

SOS-Torture Burundi calls on the administrative, police and judicial authorities to put an end to the recurrent phenomenon of lifeless bodies abandoned in the wild or in waterways and then hastily found and buried without any investigation on the orders of the administration.

SOS-Torture/Burundi was initiated with the aim of informing national and international opinion about the serious human rights violations taking place in Burundi through monitoring reports, particularly on torture, arbitrary arrests, enforced 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 December and 12 December 2015 by police and military under the pretext of pursuing rebels who had just attacked military camps on the outskirts of the capital.

The affected areas are said to be contesting the third term of President Nkurunziza, namely Musaga, Mutakura, Cibitoke, Nyakabiga and Jabe, the last two being located in the centre of Bujumbura city.