

SOS-TORTURE BURUNDI REPORT N° 338 PUBLISHED ON 4 JUNE 2022

This report by SOS-Torture Burundi covers the period from 28 May to 4 June 2022 regarding cases of human rights violations in Burundi.

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

The report also deplores the cases of one (1) person seriously injured with a machete in Gitega province and two (2) people arbitrarily arrested in Kirundo and Ruyigi provinces respectively.

1. Violations of the right to life

- On 28 May 2022, the lifeless body of an unidentified man was found on the hill and zone of Muyange in Nyanza-Lac commune of Makamba province (southern Burundi). The motive and perpetrators of the murder have not been elucidated.
- On 28 May 2022, the lifeless body of an unidentified man was discovered in the zone and commune of Nyanza-Lac, on the shores of Lake Tanganyika. The circumstances of the murder as well as the perpetrators have not been clarified.
- In the afternoon of Sunday 29 May 2022 at around 4 p.m., fishermen discovered three lifeless bodies of unidentified men in the locality of Gatoki on Rukana hill, in Rugombo commune of Cibitoke province (north-western Burundi), about 100 metres from the Rusizi river separating Burundi from the DRC (Democratic Republic of Congo).

According to witnesses to the gruesome discovery, the bodies, two of which were naked, were lying in a pool of blood and had serious head and rib injuries.

The same sources said that Rugombo's communal administrator, Gilbert Manirakiza, gave the order to bury the bodies immediately without any prior investigation to identify the victims and their perpetrators.

- On 30 May 2022, an unidentified lifeless body was found in a dyke in the locality of Kiziba, on Bukeye hill in the zone and commune of Nyanza-Lac, in Makamba province ((southern Burundi). The circumstances of the murder and its perpetrators have not been identified.
- On 31 May 2022, the lifeless body of an unidentified man was discovered in the Nyakabondo River on the hill and zone of Muyange, in Nyanza-Lac commune of Makamba province. According to local sources, the man was killed elsewhere and then thrown into the river to simulate drowning in a river so small that no one can drown in it.

2. Violations of the right to physical integrity

- On Saturday night, 29 May 2022, at around 1 a.m., Juvénal Karenzo, a resident of Gerangabo hill in Rwisabi zone, in Mutaho commune of Gitega province (central Burundi), was attacked and wounded near his home on the same hill by unidentified men armed with machetes and clubs, as he was returning alone from a local bistro after an evening spent with his friends.

Local sources say that Juvénal Karenzo narrowly escaped death after managing to disarm one of the assailants with his machete and that the others took advantage of the situation to escape.

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

- On the morning of Sunday 29 May 2022, a CNL (National Congress for Freedom) party activist known as Saidi Itangishaka was violently arrested on the hill of Rusara in Buhoro zone, in Bwambarangwe commune of Kirundo province (northern Burundi) and taken manu militari to the dungeon of Bwambarangwe commune.

According to witnesses, Saidi Itangishaka was arrested near his home by the chief of Rusara hill in the company of Imbonerakure for wearing a shirt of his political party, while militants of the CNDD-FDD (National Council for the Defence of Democracy-Forces for the Defence of Democracy) party still walk around with impunity in their party uniforms. Furthermore, the communal administrator of Bwambarangwe has illegally decreed a ban on the wearing of uniforms of other political parties, except for the ruling party.

SOS-Torture Burundi denounces the political intolerance of CNDD-FDD militants towards members of opposition parties and calls for the immediate release of Saidi Itangishaka and for the administrative authorities to treat all political parties equally. There is no provision in Burundian criminal law to punish the wearing of a political party's uniform in normal times.

- On Monday 30 May 2022, one of the representatives of Congolese refugees from the Banyamulenge community in the Bwagiriza camp, known as Alexis Mujenimana, was arrested by police officers and taken manu militari to a cell in the Ruyigi provincial police station (eastern Burundi).

According to local sources, Alexis Mujenimana was arrested at the Bwagiriza camp located in Butezi commune of Ruyigi province for the sole reason of having demanded during a meeting the return of a former camp administrator from the same Banyamulenge community who had just been replaced without a valid

reason, an attitude of the administration that did not please these refugees, who are in the majority in this camp of Congolese refugees. This provoked an uprising of more than a hundred Congolese refugees who staged a sit-in the next day in front of the office of the communal administrator to demand the release of Alexis Mujenimana, which prompted the intervention of the governor of the province of Ruyi, Emérentienne Tabu, who travelled to calm the situation.

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 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.