

SOS-TORTURE BURUNDI REPORT N° 349 PUBLISHED ON 20 AUGUST 2022

This report by SOS-Torture Burundi covers the period from 13 to 20 August 2022 regarding cases of human rights violations in Burundi.

At least five (5) people were murdered during this period in different localities in the country.

The report also deplores the case of three (3) people seriously injured, including a former Burundian army officer who was seriously injured with a machete by unidentified individuals in Bururi province and two CNL (National Congress for Freedom) party activists who were severely tortured by Imbonerakure in Muyinga province.

1. Violations of the right to life

- On the night of Sunday 14 August 2022, a woman known as Clotilde Rwaswa was killed by her husband on the hill of Gatwe in Ntega commune of Kirundo province (northern Burundi).

According to local sources, Clotilde Rwaswa had returned late from visiting friends, but her husband accused her of adultery and then beat her violently until she died of her injuries.

The same sources said that the perpetrator was arrested the next morning and taken to the dungeon of the communal police station in Ntega for investigation.

- On the morning of Monday 15 August 2022, the decomposing body of an unidentified man in his forties was discovered by farmers on their way to their cassava fields on the hill of Gisaba, Buhindo zone, Murwi commune, in Cibitoke province (northwestern Burundi).

According to local sources, the victim had gaping wounds all over her body and local people believe she was killed with a machete and a hammer.

According to the same sources, the residents, horrified by this macabre discovery, point the finger at the provincial intelligence officer in Cibitoke, police colonel Ahmed Nabil Sindayigaya, for being the author of the atrocious murder of the victim, as they saw his vehicle driving around the place where the body was discovered late the previous night. The Murwi communal administrator, Melchiade Nzokizwanayo, ordered the Buhindo zone chief and the Murwi communal police commissioner to immediately organise the burial of the victim's body without prior investigation.

SOS-Torture Burundi demands an impartial and independent investigation into all allegations of blood crimes attributed to the provincial head of the National Intelligence Service (SNR), police colonel Ahmed Nabil Sindayigaya, who has become notorious for the assassinations and enforced disappearances of people considered to be opponents of the current government.

- On the night of Tuesday 16 August 2022, a woman known as Belyse Uwizeyimana, a resident of the Gisagara district in the commune and province of Ngozi (northern Burundi), died of her injuries in a health facility in the province's capital.

According to witnesses, the victim was stabbed in the heart by her husband, Aimable Bayisabe, who was subsequently arrested and taken to the lock-up of the Ngozi police station for a judicial investigation.

- On the night of Wednesday 17 August 2022, a man named Vianney, aged 40, was killed by a group of Imbonerakure on night patrol at the 3rd transversal on the Gihungwe hill in Gihanga commune of Bubanza province (north-west of Burundi).

According to witnesses, a group of Imbonerakure led by a certain Nzoyora ordered some of the residents to return directly to their households, but they refused to comply because they saw no reason to obey this illegal order. The leader of this gang of young people from the ruling CNDD-FDD (National Council for the Defence of Democracy-Forces for the Defence of Democracy) stabbed one of the people, named Vianney, in the ribs and he died immediately.

- On the night of Wednesday 17 August 2022 at around midnight, a young man known as Jean Marie Singirankabo, aged 16, was seriously wounded with daggers by three Imbonerakure while he was on his way to the village of peace located on the Kagwema hill in Gihanga commune of Bubanza province (north-western Burundi) to help a person in distress.

According to local sources, Jean Marie Singirankabo died of his injuries before reaching the hospital where he had been evacuated. Two of the assailants are reportedly in the hands of the police for investigation.

2. Violations of the right to physical integrity

- On Saturday 13 August 2022, two CNL (National Congress for Freedom) party activists, Jean Nzisabira and Léopold Barera, were severely tortured by Imbonerakure from the CNDD-FDD-affiliated youth league on Gisanze hill, in Gashoho zone and commune of Muyinga province (north-east Burundi).

According to witnesses, while CNL representatives in the commune of Gashoho had organised a meeting of the party's communal committee at their office located on the hill of Gisanze, three Imbonerakure named Ernest Cishatse alias Petit (head of the Imbonerakure in the commune of Gashoho) Fulgence Mfuranzima (leader of the Imbonerakure on the hill of Gisanze) and Rugerinyange (leader of the Imbonerakure on the hill of Muruta) arrived in a hurry on board two motorbikes and manu militari embarked two of the young militants of the CNL (Inyankamugayo), Jean Nzisabira and Léopold Barera, in the direction of the CNDD-FDD office in the same commune. They were then subjected to atrocious torture sessions: Jean Nzisabira's arm was broken, while some of Léopold Barera's ribs were broken. While beating them violently, their torturers kept reminding them that they were going to correct them because they had become deaf and that, even if Agathon Rwasa intervened, he would suffer the same fate.

The same sources said that the two victims were first evacuated in critical condition to the health centre of Gashoho in the afternoon of Saturday 13 August 2022 before being transferred in the evening to the hospital of Muyinga where they spent three days being bedridden while their torturers were not worried.

SOS-Torture deplures the persistent political intolerance of CNDD-FDD militants towards members of the opposition parties, especially towards CNL militants; a situation that has become intractable because of the support and encouragement of CNDD-FDD party officials at the highest level, in this case the party's Secretary General, Révérien Ndikuriyo. It therefore calls on the judicial authorities to conduct an impartial and independent investigation with a view to cracking down in accordance with the law on the bad actions of the Imbonerakure if it wants to restore its image, which has been tarnished by acts of complacency towards the current regime.

- On the night of Tuesday 16 August 2022, at around 10 p.m., a retired colonel of the former Burundian Armed Forces (FAB) known as Anicet Nahigombeye was seriously wounded with a machete in an ambush by a group of unidentified criminals near his home in the Gisuru district of the Mugozi zone, in the commune and province of Bururi (southern Burundi).

According to local sources, Colonel Anicet Nahigombeye received three machete blows to the head and forehead before being evacuated to Bururi hospital where he is receiving treatment, while the perpetrators quickly fled before help arrived.

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 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.