

SOS-TORTURE BURUNDI REPORT N° 356 PUBLISHED ON 08 OCTOBER 2022

This report by SOS-Torture Burundi covers the period from 1st to 8 October 2022 concerning cases of human rights violations in Burundi.

At least two (2) people were injured in the province of Bururi.

The report also deplors the cases of three (3) people who were arbitrarily arrested and detained in Bujumbura city and Kayanza province as well as the case of one (1) woman who was raped in Rumonge province.

1. Violations of the right to physical integrity

- On the morning of Saturday 1st October 2022, at around 6 a.m., two young brothers and sons of the late Damien Ruvuzo, Jean Claude Ruvuzo and Eddy Habimana, were seriously injured with machetes and clubs during an attack by a group of individuals who had ambushed them on the Munyinya hill of the Muzenga zone, in the commune of Rutovu of the Bururi province (southern Burundi). A land dispute between the two families is said to be behind these acts of physical violence.

According to witnesses, a group of people from the same family, including Eloge Niyoyankunze, Kévin Bigabo and Igor, all sons of a man called Zacharie Nzakaha, including their mother and servant, attacked the young men when they were bringing money to pay workers who were making charcoal. The attackers hid in a bush in the locality. Eddy Habimana was seriously injured in the head and was evacuated to one of the hospitals in Bujumbura city, while his brother Jean Claude Ruvuzo was injured in the arms when he tried to defend himself and was robbed of his Android mobile phone and a sum of five hundred thousand Burundian francs (500,000 Fbu), which would have been used to pay the workers.

The same sources state that some of the attackers arrested by the police were released without waiting for the end of the investigations, while one of the victims, Jean Claude Ruvuzo, was also curiously taken and detained in the police cell.

SOS-Torture Burundi calls for a full and independent investigation to determine responsibility and bring the alleged perpetrators to justice.

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

- On the morning of Wednesday 5 October 2022 at around 8 a.m., a man known as Claude Irankunda was arrested and beaten by agents of the National Intelligence Service (SNR) in the grounds of the hospital in Kayanza (northern Burundi).

According to witnesses, an SNR vehicle carrying a businessman, Vincent Ndagijimana, a native of the hill of Kivuvu in the Kabarore commune of the same province of Kayanza and uncle of Claude Irankunda, burst into the courtyard of the hospital near the morgue where members of his family had gathered to attend the funeral of an old man who had died. SNR agents brutally arrested and handcuffed Claude Irankunda, the nephew of this merchant and grandson of the deceased, after violently beating him when he tried to resist, supported by members of the deceased's close family.

The same sources reveal that the arrest of Claude Irankunda is linked to a settlement of accounts between him and this businessman who is his employer in the mines of Kabarore.

- On Wednesday 5 October 2022, police officers disguised as civilians mistreated and violently beat a woman named Chantal at the "Flic en Flac" gallery located next to the former "Le Cayor" building in the city of Bujumbura (western Burundi).

According to witnesses, this mother of a child under one year old who was putting away kitchen utensils inside this gallery was mistaken for a street vendor by policemen in civilian clothes who had entered the gallery, mistaking her for one of the vendors who had hidden there.

According to the same sources, a photographer who works in the area and knows the victim tried to come to her rescue, but both people were taken away in a police vehicle to be detained at the judicial police.

3. Case of gender-based violence (rape)

- On the night of Wednesday to Thursday, 6 October 2022, an officer of the judicial police (OPJ) known as Nathanaël Ntakirutimana, assigned to the provincial police station in Rumonge (south-western Burundi), threatened a female detainee out of a cell and raped her in a house located in the neighbourhood known as "Centre" in the same province of Rumonge.

According to local sources, it was upon the return of the abused woman to her cell that her fellow inmates cried foul and that this OPJ was arrested by his colleagues.

The same sources confirm that Nathanaël Ntakirutimana was tried and sentenced on Friday 7 October 2022 in a flagrante delicto trial by the Tribunal of Rumonge to 15 years' penal servitude and a fine of five hundred thousand Burundian francs (500,000 Fbu) for raping a woman held in a police cell in Rumonge.



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 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.