

SOS-TORTURE BURUNDI REPORT N° 361 PUBLISHED ON 12 NOVEMBER 2022

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

At least four (4) people were murdered during this period in different parts of the country.

The report also deplores the cases of two (2) people who were seriously injured in Makamba province and of one (1) woman who was arbitrarily arrested and detained in Bubanza province.

1. Violations of the right to life

- On Monday 7 November 2022, the lifeless body of Michel Rashidi, a native and resident of the Kamenge zone in the municipality of Bujumbura (western Burundi), was found in the morgue of the Kamenge University Hospital (commonly known as King Khaled Hospital). According to sources at the hospital, the body was brought by police agents.

According to local sources, Michel Rashidi disappeared on the evening of Saturday 5 November 2022 after spending some time with a friend nicknamed Cacao at the Jardin bar located in the Kigobe district close to the General Commissariat for Migration, in the same city of Bujumbura.

The same sources say that the lifeless body of Michel Rashidi was discovered on Sunday morning lying in a gutter near a REGIDESO (Water and Electricity Production and Distribution company) power station, at the bottom of the North Station in Kamenge. The body showed no signs of violence, suggesting that

Michel Rashidi, a former football player and currently a modern carpenter, had been strangled by unidentified people.

SOS-Torture Burundi calls on the police and judicial authorities to conduct a thorough and independent investigation to determine the circumstances and perpetrators of the murder and bring them to justice.

- On the night of Monday to Tuesday, 8 November 2022, at around 3 a.m., a man known as Nehemiah Irishura, aged around 40, was shot dead by policemen providing security for the local administrator of Ngozi (northern Burundi).

According to local sources, Nehemiah Irishura, a native of the commune of Marangara in the same province, was killed at the home of the administrator of the Ngozi commune by police agents who suspected him of attempted robbery in complicity with two other men who narrowly escaped being shot by the police.

SOS-Torture Burundi deplors the lack of professionalism of the Burundian police, particularly in the legal use of force, and calls on the Judiciary to carry out a thorough, independent and impartial investigation in order to determine the circumstances of this murderous shooting, identify the alleged perpetrators and punish them in accordance with the law. It also condemns the attitude of the administration and the police who rushed to take the mortal remains to the morgue of a local health facility without waiting for a judicial investigation to begin, with the intention of distorting the results of any subsequent investigation.

- On Tuesday 8 November 2022, the lifeless body of a man named Bizimana, aged 46, was found hanging from a rope on a mango tree at Buhinyuza hill in Buhiga commune, in Karusi province (central Burundi).

According to local sources, although the local administration focuses on suicide as the cause of death, the victim was killed elsewhere and his executioners hung his

body from this tree to simulate suicide and thus prevent any further investigation into the exact circumstances of his death.

- A report received by SOS-Torture Burundi on 11 November 2022 reveals that a decomposing body of an unidentified man was discovered on 4 November 2022 on Kinganda hill in the Gitaba zone, in the commune and province of Rutana (south-east Burundi).

According to witnesses to the gruesome discovery, the body was lying near the Musanza River in an advanced state of decomposition. The local administration rushed to order the burial of the body immediately after its discovery without regard to the results of an investigation that should have been launched.

2. Violations of the right to physical integrity

- On the afternoon of Tuesday 8 November 2022, at around 6 p.m., a widow named Caritas, aged 70, and her servant named Ndayisaba, aged 25, were seriously injured with a machete by their neighbour Gilbert Nyandwi on the Kazirabageni hill in the commune of Nyanza-lac, in the province of Makamba (southern Burundi).

According to witnesses, the two victims were harvesting oil palm fruit at the time of the attack and a land dispute that had been pending in court for some time was behind the crime, which was repeated for the second time.

The same sources reveal that the injured persons were evacuated to the hospital of Nyanza-lac while the alleged perpetrator and his father, originally from the hill of Murinda in the commune of Vugizo (same province), were arrested and taken to the lock-up of the communal police station for investigation.

3. Violation of the right to liberty: arbitrary arrest and detention

- On Tuesday 8 November 2022, a woman known as Renate Ndayishimiye was arbitrarily arrested in the commune of Gihanga and taken directly to the central prison of Bubanza for arbitrary detention (north-west of Burundi).

According to local sources, this woman was accused of complicity in the rape of her 4-year-old son over a 6-year-old girl whose mother is known as Nelly Nifasha. Despite the medical report confirming that the rape had not occurred, Nelly Nifasha, who has knowledge of the National Intelligence Service (SNR), filed a complaint with the Public Prosecutor's Office in Bubanza, which decided to imprison her on the basis of a far-fetched fact.

SOS-Torture Burundi denounces the manipulation of the Burundian justice system to serve the interests of private individuals and demands that the victim be released unconditionally and that all those who participated in this set-up be arrested and tried in accordance with the relevant provisions of the penal code.

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.