

SOS-TORTURE BURUNDI REPORT N° 364 PUBLISHED ON 03 DECEMBER 2022

This report by SOS-Torture Burundi covers the period from 26 November to 3 December 2022 concerning cases of human rights violations in Burundi.

At least three (3) people were murdered during this period in different parts of the country.

The report also deplores the cases of one (1) person seriously injured by Imbonerakure militiamen and four (4) CNL (National Congress for Freedom) party activists who were arbitrarily arrested and detained in Gitega province.

1. Violations of the right to life

- On the afternoon of Saturday 26 November 2022, Ferdinand Nyandwi alias Kambayingwe, was murdered by soldiers and policemen who atrociously tortured him near the "Institut Universitaire des Lacs de Kirundo (IULKi)" in the commune and province of Kirundo (northern Burundi).

According to local sources, Kambayingwe was called on the phone by a woman named Jacqueline Kamashara who asked him to bring a bag of charcoal entrusted to him by this woman and another Imbonerakure known as Jean-Claude Nsengiyumva. Kambayingwe then borrowed a bicycle from his neighbour Gervais and loaded the bag in the direction of the place agreed with Jacqueline Kamashara. When he arrived at his destination, Ferdinand Nyandwi alias Kambayingwe, aged 45 and father of three, found several soldiers and policemen in the company of Abel Ahishakiye (head of the Youth League Imbonerakure in Kirundo province), the president of the CNDD-FDD party in Kirundo, the provincial police commissioner in Kirundo and Jovith Butoyi (head of the National Intelligence Service in Kirundo province). These policemen and soldiers then

began to violently torture him with several blows all over his body, trampling him while he was lying on the ground, all the while accusing him of being a criminal and of possessing firearms, in the presence of Jacqueline Kamashara and Jean-Claude Nsengiyumva. Kambayingwe finally died on the spot under the atrocious acts of torture. After noticing that he had already died, policemen rushed to the charcoal bag to ransack it in search of a possible Kalashnikov that the victim had hidden there, but in vain. The same sources reveal that the body of Kambayingwe, a former refugee from the Mahama camp in Rwanda and repatriated in 2020 at the appeal of President Evariste Ndayishimiye, was loaded into Abel Ahishakiye's vehicle bound for the Murehe forest in Busoni commune where he was shot to simulate that he had been shot in his attempt to escape.

According to the same sources, Viateur Habimana, the communal administrator of Kirundo, went the next day around 11a.m. to the parents of the victim on the hill of Kinyinya in the same commune to inform them that their son had been killed after being caught in possession of a rifle and its ammunition as well as grenades that he had hidden in a bag of charcoal. He added that Ferdinand Nyandwi alias Kambayingwe was shot dead in his attempt to escape when he was taken to this forest to show the cache of other weapons.

SOS-Torture Burundi denounces the persistence of crimes committed by the forces of law and order and members of the ruling party who are still surrounded by absolute impunity. It calls on the judiciary to initiate an independent and impartial investigation to determine the exact circumstances of the assassination of Ferdinand Nyandwi alias Kambayingwe and to identify the perpetrators and accomplices in order to bring them to justice.

- On the morning of Wednesday 30 November 2022, the lifeless body of an unidentified woman was discovered near the market of Kizuka, in the commune and province of Rumonge (south-west of Burundi).

Witnesses to the gruesome discovery said that the victim, reportedly a teacher at one of the basic schools in Kizuka, was undressed and showed signs of strangulation.

According to local sources, the victim's body was evacuated in a vehicle from the commune of Rumonge to the provincial hospital morgue.

- On the morning of Friday 2 December 2022, a member of the CNL known as Lionel Nzoyisaba died in the general hospital of Mpanda as a result of acts of torture inflicted on him by the Imbonerakure after having arrested him the day before on the Nyabikere hill in the Musenyi zone, in Mpanda commune of Bubanza province (north-western Burundi).

According to witnesses, Lionel Nzoyisaba was arrested on charges of theft on the evening of 1st December 2022 in a shop by a group of Imbonerakure who took him manu militari to the Gifurwe River for atrocious torture sessions. They brought him back the same night, in a very critical state of health, to the police station in Mpanda and the judicial police officer (OPJ) who interrogated him, instead of evacuating him directly to the hospital, detained him in a cell. It was after a few hours that the OPJ realised that Lionel Nzoyisaba was dying and decided to take him to the General Hospital in Mpanda, where he succumbed to his injuries.

The same sources reveal that the perpetrators of the crime, although well identified, have not been worried and continue to enjoy their freedom.

SOS-Torture Burundi deploras the total impunity enjoyed by the Imbonerakure who are accused of heinous crimes and calls on the judicial authorities to arrest the alleged perpetrators in order to punish them in accordance with the law.

2. Violations of the right to physical integrity

- Information received by SOS-Torture Burundi on 28 November reveals that on 20 November 2022, a man known as Prosper Bitangayezu was seriously wounded with a knife in the abdomen by Ernest Hakizimana, an Imbonerakure member of the Youth League of the ruling party CNDD-FDD (National Council for the Defence of Democracy-Forces for the Defence of Democracy). The crime was perpetrated on the Gatabo hill in the commune of Shombo of Karusi province (central-eastern Burundi).

According to a witness, Prosper Bitangayezu asked for the payment of two thousand Burundian francs for a service of unloading goods from his assailant's vehicle; but, instead of carrying out his contractual obligation, Ernest Hakizimana inflicted three stab wounds on the victim, who was only demanding his due.

Local sources said that the victim was immediately evacuated to the Nyabibuye health centre to receive first aid and that he was later transferred to the Cinquantaire hospital "Ntawe Turashoboye" located in the capital of Karusi province where he is still hospitalised. Nevertheless, Ernest Hakizimana, also known in several other cases of human rights violations in the commune of Shombo, has not been bothered by the justice system and remains free.

SOS-Torture Burundi once again denounces the phenomenon of impunity surrounding the regular abuses committed by the Imbonerakure and demands that Ernest Hakizimana be arrested and brought to justice to be punished according to the law.

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

- On Saturday 26 November 2022, four leaders of the CNL party in the commune of Buraza of Gitega province (central Burundi) were arrested and taken to a police cell in Buraza where they are currently being held.

According to witnesses, Isaac Ndayisenga (head of the CNL party in the commune of Buraza), Gilbert Ndayisaba (in charge of youth), Mérite Munyaneza (in charge of ideology and propaganda) and Boniface Nyandwi (in charge of mobilisation) were arrested by the police on the orders of the communal administrator, Désiré Niyongabo, while they were in the communal office of their party located on Rweza hill, planning activities of their political party.

According to the same sources, these four leaders of the CNL in Buraza commune were arrested on the spurious charge of being on a list of people who stole sweet potatoes from a field, while Boniface Nyandwi (from the Batwa ethnic community) was also accused of possessing bows and arrows. The same sources state that all these accusations are spurious and that the real motive for their arbitrary arrest and detention is linked to the political intolerance of the CNDD-FDD party, which is expressed through various montages against activists of opposition political groups.

SOS-Torture Burundi asks the President of the Republic, Évariste Ndayishimiye, to unlock the political space and to promote openness and political tolerance within his party, the CNDD-FDD, and to put an end to the use of justice for political ends.



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.