

SOS-TORTURE BURUNDI REPORT N° 370 PUBLISHED ON 14 JANUARY 2023

This report by SOS-Torture Burundi covers the period from 7 to 14 January 2023 regarding cases of human rights violations in Burundi.

At least one (1) person was murdered during this period in Bujumbura city.

The report also deplores the cases of three (3) people who were seriously injured by policemen and Imbonerakure in Gitega and Ngozi provinces.

1. Violation of the right to life

- On Sunday 8 January 2023, the lifeless body of an elderly woman known as Juliette Karerwa was found in her house in Mutanga Nord quarter of the Ntakangwa commune in Bujumbura city (western Burundi).

According to witnesses to the gruesome discovery, the body of the victim was found after the woman had gone three days without news when the gate of her house remained closed. As her phone was still ringing without picking up, neighbours and family members took the decision to break down the gate and door of her house to discover that Juliette Karerwa had been murdered after being severely tortured.

The same sources claim not to know the motive for his assassination but suspect elements of the SNR (National Intelligence Service) to be the perpetrators.

SOS-Torture Burundi deplores the fact that peaceful citizens continue to be murdered on the sly and in the complicit silence of the Burundian authorities. It calls for an independent and impartial investigation to discover the perpetrators of the crime and bring them to justice.

2. Violations of the right to physical integrity

- A report received by SOS-Torture Burundi reveals that on the night of Tuesday 3 January 2023 at around 9pm, a man known as Richard Niyongabire was seriously beaten and injured with knives by a group of five Imbonerakure (members of the youth league of the ruling CNDD-FDD) led by a certain Protais Gacurabuhoro, headmaster of the Basic School (ECOFO) of Birohe and leader of the Imbonerakure on this hill of Birohe in the commune and province of Gitega (central Burundi).

According to local sources, these Imbonerakure on night patrol found Richard Niyongabire in a small bush in the grip of an epileptic seizure and beat him violently and wounded him with knives in the arms. They dumped him in a critical condition in a small bush near the Polytechnic University of Gitega, before admitting him to the regional hospital of Gitega for intensive care.

The same sources said that since then the five Imbonerakure remain free and have not been sued by the police for the crime committed despite the complaint filed by the victim's family at the judicial police station in Gitega.

SOS-Torture Burundi denounces the acts of violence that are regularly committed with impunity by imbonerakure and demands that these 5 imbonerakure be brought to justice to answer for their criminally reprehensible acts.

- On the morning of Tuesday 10 January 2023, two former members of the defence and security forces, Alexandre (a former soldier) and Rupfu (a former policeman), were seriously injured, one of them by a bullet fired by a policeman at the time of their arrest by policemen and imbonerakure in the commune of Gashikanwa of the Ngozi province (northern Burundi).

According to witnesses, these two men from the Mutimbuzi commune of the Bujumbura province (western Burundi) had spent the night in a hotel located in the centre of the Gashikanwa commune, but were suspected of being criminals without any proof, since even a search by the police in the rooms where they had spent the night did not reveal any suspicious object proving that they were criminals. The same sources specify that Alexandre, who was wounded in the leg by a bullet fired by a policeman, was hospitalised at the Ngozi autonomous hospital, while Rupfu, who was wounded in the head by Imbonerakure and policemen, was incarcerated at the judicial police cell in Ngozi.

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.