

SOS-TORTURE BURUNDI REPORT N° 371 PUBLISHED ON 21 JANUARY 2023

This report by SOS-Torture Burundi covers the period from 14 to 21 January 2023 regarding cases of human rights violations in Burundi.

At least six (6) people were murdered during this period in some localities of the country.

The report also deplors the case of one (1) retired soldier who has been arbitrarily detained in the police cell in Mwaro for over a week.

1. Violations of the right to life

- On the night of Saturday 14 January 2022, three men who have not yet been identified were killed by elements of the Burundi National Police (PNB) in a household located on 10th avenue no. 23 of the Mutakura district of the Cibitoke zone, in the urban commune of Ntahangwa, to the north of the commercial city of Bujumbura (western Burundi).

According to local sources, they were shot by police officers on patrol who suspected them of being robbers and died on the spot. The bodies of the three were evacuated to the morgue of Prince Regent Charles Hospital in the centre of the economic city, Bujumbura.

- On the morning of Monday 16 January 2023, two lifeless bodies of unidentified men were discovered by cotton farmers on their way to their fields on the 8th transversal hill and zone of Cibitoke, in the commune of Rugombo in the same province of Cibitoke (north-west Burundi).

According to witnesses to the macabre discovery, the two bodies were tied together and buried on the spot the same day by young Imbonerakure from the

CNDD-FDD youth league on the orders of the administrator of the Rugombo commune, Gilbert Manirakiza.

SOS-Torture Burundi deplores the fact that people continue to be murdered in the complacent silence of the Burundian authorities, who never cease to sing that life and security reign throughout the country. It calls on the police and judicial authorities to carry out independent and impartial investigations in order to identify the perpetrators and bring them to justice.

- In the afternoon of Wednesday 18 January 2023, the decomposing body of a former soldier of the ex-FAB (Burundian Armed Forces) named Désiré was discovered in a house located in the Makamba II district of the capital of the province of Makamba (southern Burundi).

According to local sources, witnesses to the macabre discovery were alerted by a foul smell coming from a house and informed the local administration and the Red Cross, which organised the burial of the deceased on the same day.

The same sources state that the motive and circumstances of the death of Désiré, who was originally from the Bwiza zone of Bujumbura and worked in a restaurant in the provincial capital, have not been clarified.

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

- A retired soldier who served in the ex-FAB, Elvis Nzigamasabo, has been in arbitrary detention since 12 January 2023 at the provincial police station in Mwaro (central Burundi).

According to witnesses, the retired soldier was arrested in Kibumbu in Kayokwe commune of the same province of Mwaro by agents of the National Intelligence

Service (SNR) and was taken to the police dungeon in Kayokwe commune before being transferred to the cell of the provincial police station.

The same sources revealed that Elvis Nzigamasabo was accused without proof of providing information to Burundian media in exile and that his mobile phone was seized for search.

SOS-Torture Burundi denounces the violations of the rights of Burundian citizens regularly committed by certain SNR agents in violation of the relevant provisions of the Burundian constitution. It calls for the immediate release of Elvis Nzigamasabo who was deprived of his liberty on false allegations and in violation of the relevant provisions of the code of criminal procedure.

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.