

SOS-TORTURE BURUNDI REPORT N° 378 PUBLISHED ON 18 MARCH 2023

This report by SOS-Torture Burundi covers the period from 11 to 18 March 2023 regarding cases of human rights violations in Burundi.

At least two (2) people were murdered during this period in different parts of the country.

The report also deplores the case of two (2) people who were seriously wounded with machetes by Imbonerakure in the province of Bubanza and that of one (1) person who was arbitrarily arrested and detained in the province of Rumonge.

1. Violations of the right to life

- On the morning of Friday 17 March 2023, the lifeless body of Jean Baraton Mizero, aged 34, was found in the Nyambeho valley on the Kiremera hill in the commune of Giheta of Gitega province (central Burundi).

According to witnesses of the macabre discovery, the victim was savagely stabbed and then slit by unidentified individuals on his way back to his home located on the Kibogoye hill in the same commune.

- On the afternoon of Saturday 18 March 2023, at around 3 p.m., Vital Mukeshimana died in Mutoyi hospital as a result of the wounds inflicted on him the previous day by his brother-in-law Célestin Niyonzima.

According to local sources, Célestin Niyonzima, aged 41, called his brother-in-law Vital Mukeshimana, aged 32, to buy him a glass of beer at the Mutoyi trading centre in the commune of Bugendana of Gitega province. After a while, Célestin Niyonzima pulled his brother-in-law aside and struck him several times with a machete.

The same sources state that the victim was rushed to Mutoyi hospital where he died of his injuries the next day and that the perpetrator fled immediately after the crime was committed.

SOS-Torture Burundi deplores the resurgence of crime in Gitega province and calls on the judicial and police authorities to conduct investigations to identify the perpetrators and punish them in accordance with the law.

2. Violations of the right to physical integrity

- In an interval of two consecutive days, two people were seriously wounded with machetes by Imbonerakure in the hill and zone of Buringa in the commune of Gihanga of Bubanza province (northwestern Burundi).

According to local sources, on the night of Saturday to Sunday 12 March 2023, a man known as Dismas Nsengiyumva was ambushed by a group of Imbonerakure (a youth league affiliated to the CNDD-FDD party) who ordered him to stop. Having noticed that these men were carrying clubs and machetes, Dismas Nsengiyumva tried to flee but the Imbonerakure caught up with him and stabbed him several times, even cutting his testicles. The victim was evacuated the next morning to the health centre at 8th transversal before being transferred, in a very critical state, to one of the hospitals in the Bujumbura city.

Another person was seriously injured with machetes on the night of Sunday to Monday 13 March 2023 by the same Imbonerakure who took him to the health centre of the 8th transversal. According to local sources, the patient is guarded by these Imbonerakure who control the people who come to visit him in the hospital bed.

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

- On the afternoon of Wednesday 15 March 2023, Sylvain Gashindi, chief of the Mutambara hill in the Gatete zone, in the commune and province of Rumonge (south-western Burundi), was arbitrarily arrested by the police and detained at the provincial police station.

According to witnesses, Sylvain Gashindi was arrested by the provincial police commissioner in Rumonge who incarcerated him after a brief interrogation by a judicial police officer. The arrest followed a complaint by a certain Jonathan Majid who accused the victim without proof of having slept with his wife. Local sources believe that the real motive for Sylvain Gashindi's arrest is related to land disputes between them.

SOS-Torture Burundi denounces the arbitrary arrest and detention of Sylvain Gashindi and demands his immediate release. Indeed, even if the offence of adultery were to be established against the alleged accomplice, Sylvain Gashindi, there would have been no need to place him in police custody since, according to Article 550 of the penal code in force in Burundi, "*the spouse convicted of adultery is punished by a fine of twenty to one hundred thousand Burundian francs*" and, consequently, the legislator has not provided for any penalty of penal servitude for this offence.



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.