

SOS-TORTURE BURUNDI REPORT N° 388 PUBLISHED ON 20 MAY 2023

This report by SOS-Torture Burundi covers the period from 13 to 20 May 2023 regarding cases of human rights violations in Burundi.

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

The report also deplors the cases of three (3) people who were seriously injured with machetes in Bururi province.

1. Violations of the right to life

- A report received by SOS-Torture Burundi reveals that on the night of Friday 5 May 2023 at around 9 p.m., Etienne Ndariye, leader of the CNL (National Congress for Freedom) party on the Buruhukiro hill of the Rusengo zone, in the commune and province of Ruyigi (eastern Burundi), was savagely murdered with machetes by two Imbonerakure, Felix Niyonkuru and Felix Bizimana.

According to the same source, Etienne Ndariye was murdered by these two members of the youth league affiliated to the CNDD-FDD (National Council for the Defence of Democracy-Forces for the Defence of Democracy) party because of his political affiliation, some 200 metres from his home on the same hill in Buruhukiro, as he was returning from a local market.

SOS-Torture Burundi has learned that the two alleged criminals were arrested by the police the day after the crime and that they were then taken to the provincial police station before being transferred to Ruyigi Central Prison where they are actually being held.

- On the night of Sunday 14 May 2023, Leonidas Ngendanzi, a prisoner in the central prison of Gitega (central Burundi), died of injuries inflicted on him inside the prison by other prisoners who are members of the security committee, including a certain Kinani, Bimenyimana and Jonas, under the orders of the chief in charge of the prisoners, Japhet Hatibu.

According to witnesses, Leonidas Ngendanzi, a native of Karusi province and detained at Gitega Central Prison since 2018, was atrociously tortured to punish him for not respecting hygiene measures simply because he had just urinated outside the toilet. After being severely beaten, he was taken to a correctional cell where he succumbed to his injuries a few hours later.

The same sources revealed that the perpetrators of the murder of Leonidas Ngendanzi, instead of being arrested to be punished in accordance with the law, were transferred to other prisons on the decision of prison officials.

SOS-Torture Burundi deploras the attitude of the Minister of Justice, Domine Banyankimbona, and the Burundian prison authorities, who encourage the many abuses regularly committed against other prisoners by prisoners who are supposedly responsible for security in the detention centres. It calls on the Minister responsible for prisons to take urgent measures to correct this bad system and to prosecute any prisoner who has been involved in acts of torture or murder of other prisoners, which have been legion in all Burundian prisons since the CNDD-FDD came to power.

- On the night of Sunday 14 May 2023, a man named Lionel was killed by his wife at the marital home located in the Mirango II district of the Kamenge zone, in the urban commune of Ntakangwa in the Bujumbura municipality (western Burundi).

According to local sources, Lionel returned from his job as a driver at around 7 p.m. and found that his wife was not at home. He decided to sleep with his two

children after learning that his wife was in a bistro called "Royal" on 8th avenue in the same Mirango II neighbourhood. The woman returned two hours later and when the victim asked her where she was from, she stabbed him in the heart.

SOS-Torture Burundi has learned that this woman was arrested the same night by the police and that she was taken to the Kamenge zone jail for the preparation of her criminal file.

- On the afternoon of Wednesday 17 May 2023, Jean Murokozi, an Imbonerakure in his thirties, was violently beaten with sticks and clubs by an angry population after he was caught in the act of attempting to rape a 15-year-old girl on the Kinazi hill in the Rugari zone, in the commune and province of Muyinga (north-east Burundi).

According to witnesses, Jean Murokozi, nicknamed Masita, succumbed to his injuries on the morning of Thursday 18 May in Muyinga hospital, where he had been evacuated following a police intervention.

The same sources said that when the victim tried to scream for help, local residents were alerted by the girl's cries and attacked the assailant, after disarming him of his machete which he had tried to use to attack the crowd.

- On the night of Wednesday to Thursday 18 May 2023 at around 1 a.m., Abel Ngendakumana, aged 47 and father of 7, was killed with an axe by unidentified bandits who had found him at his post as a sentry at a shop located on the Kimanama hill in the Mubuga zone, in the commune and province of Gitega (central Burundi).

According to local sources, after fatally wounding the sentry, the bandits robbed the shop before fleeing, while the victim succumbed to his injuries moments later during evacuation to the Mubuga health centre. To date, no suspect has been apprehended in connection with the investigation of this heinous murder.

SOS-Torture Burundi denounces a resurgence of crime in several localities of the country and asks the police and administrative authorities to take urgent measures to identify the members of these criminal networks and put them out of action.

- On the morning of Friday 19 May 2023, a lifeless body of a man who was later identified as Evangelist Joseph Niyonkuru was discovered in a stream on Buranga hill in Gasanda zone of Bururi commune and province (southern Burundi).

According to local sources, the circumstances and perpetrators of the evangelist's death have not yet been clarified. Witnesses to the gruesome discovery said that a large stone had been placed on the body of the victim by those responsible for his murder. The same sources said that Joseph Niyonkuru had been missing since Wednesday 18 May when he left his home for his routine evangelistic mission in the Gasanda zone, bordering Buyengero commune, and that he never returned.

SOS-Torture Burundi deplors the resurgence of criminality that has been taking place in the capital of Bururi province and its surroundings since last April. It asks the administrative and police authorities of this locality to take appropriate measures to curb this criminal phenomenon, which is aiming at well-targeted personalities and is becoming more and more worrying.

2. Violations of the right to physical integrity

- On the night of Sunday 14 May 2023, at around 8 p.m., a retired policeman known as Dismas Ndayiragije was seriously wounded in the arm with a machete by three young men as he was returning to his home located on the hill of Mugozi, in the commune and province of Bururi, some 6 km from the capital of this southern province of Burundi.

According to local sources, Dismas Ndayiragije was able to identify his attackers, Yves Nihorimbere and James Niyobushobozi, who live on the Mudahandwa hill in

the same commune of Bururi. He was seriously injured in the arm while trying to defend himself and was evacuated to Bururi hospital for medical treatment.

The same sources said that the two criminals were arrested by the police and taken to the Bururi judicial police lock-up for investigation.

SOS-Torture Burundi deplores the resurgence of crime since last April in the capital of Bururi province and its surroundings, where people have been killed or wounded with machetes by unidentified individuals, in a context where no investigation has yet been carried out to identify the presumed perpetrators of this new form of crime. It calls on the police and the Bururi prosecutor's office to conduct a thorough and in-depth investigation based on these arrested youths in order to identify all the members of this criminal network and to dismantle it.

- On the night of Thursday 19 May 2023, at around 11.30 p.m., a woman known as Languide Kamikazi, aged 38, working at the "Ecole Technique Monseigneur Bernard Bududira" located in the capital of Bururi province, was seriously wounded with machetes to the head and arm by unidentified and undressed men who found her at her home in the Gatanga sub-hill of the Mugozi hill, in the commune and province of Bururi (southern Burundi).

According to local sources, the perpetrators found the victim in her bedroom after breaking a window in her house. She was evacuated in a critical condition to Bururi hospital where she is receiving intensive care.

SOS-Torture Burundi calls for a thorough and credible investigation to identify the alleged perpetrators and bring them to justice.

- On the night of Friday 19 May 2023, Marius Ndiwenishiga, aged 61, was seriously injured with a machete by a certain Claude Nshimirimana on the Rwamiko sub-hill

in the centre of Kiremba, in the commune and province of Bururi (southern Burundi).

According to local sources, the alleged perpetrator was in turn seriously injured in the head by the angry population of this sub-hill of Rwamiko who had caught him in his attempt to flee and wanted to take justice into their own hands had it not been for the quick intervention of the police who were able to narrowly save him.

According to the same sources, the victim and his attacker were all evacuated the same night to Bururi hospital where they are receiving intensive care. In the meantime, two other youths named Richard and Egide were arrested the next day by the police after being denounced by Claude Nshimirimana as part of the criminal gang.

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.