

SOS-TORTURE BURUNDI REPORT NO. 389 PUBLISHED ON 27 MAY 2023

This report by SOS-Torture Burundi covers the period from 20 to 27 May 2023 concerning cases of human rights violations in Burundi.

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

The report also deplors the case of one (1) CNL (National Congress for Freedom) party activist who has been abducted in Bururi province by agents of the National Intelligence Service (SNR).

1. Violations of the right to life

- On Saturday 20 June 2023, the lifeless body of Elysée Arakaza, a young man aged 26 from the commune of Vyanda in the province of Bururi, was found in a ditch beside the Rwaba River on the Bukeye hill, in the capital of the commune of Nyanza-Lac in Makamba province (southern Burundi).

According to local sources, the perpetrator and the circumstances of his death have not been identified.

SOS-Torture Burundi is calling for a judicial enquiry to identify the perpetrators of the crime and bring them to justice.

- On the night of 19 to 20 May 2023, a young man known as Jean Claude Niyongabo succumbed to the blows and wounds inflicted on him by a group of Imbonerakure members of the youth league affiliated to the ruling party, CNDD-FDD (National Council for the Defence of Democracy-Forces for the Defence of Democracy), on night patrol on the Shembe hill in the Muzye zone, in Giharo commune of Rutana province (south-east Burundi).

According to local sources, Jean Claude Niyongabo was returning from fishing in a river in the locality when he was ambushed by this criminal gang led by a certain Diduda, head of the Imbonerakure in the Muzye zone, in the company of the Muzye zone chief, Désiré, and other Imbonerakure, including Dismas Niyonzima alias Muduri, Clément, Julias, Anicet and Dominique, who violently beat him up because he refused to give them fish.

According to the same sources, thanks to the intervention of his father and neighbours, Jean Claude Niyongabo was evacuated to Gihofi district hospital in the commune of Bukemba of the same province of Rutana, where he unfortunately succumbed to his injuries a few moments later that same night.

SOS-Torture Burundi has learned that some of these Imbonerakure were arrested the next day, but that they were quickly released on the orders of Sylvain Nzikoruriho, provincial secretary of the CNDD-FDD. She deplored the total impunity enjoyed by the Imbonerakure throughout the country, which encourages them to perpetuate crime because they believe they can do whatever they like.

- On the evening of Sunday 21 May 2023, the lifeless body of a septuagenarian known as Pierre Nyandwi was discovered in the valley of the Mugombwa stream on the Mivo hill in the commune of Mabanda, in Makamba province (southern Burundi).

According to witnesses to the gruesome discovery, the victim's body showed signs of violence, proving that she had been murdered by unidentified individuals.

The same sources said that Pierre Nyandwi's body was fished out of the water by Red Cross volunteers working in the locality before being buried the following morning on the orders of the Mabanda local administrator, Jean Berry Hatungimana.

- On the night of Tuesday to Wednesday 24 May 2023, a policeman in drunkenness standing guard at a local microfinance institution shot dead a man known as Ndagijimana at the modern market in Mabayi, located in the administrative centre of this commune in Cibitoke province (north-west Burundi).

According to an eyewitness who followed the whole macabre scene, the policeman who shot Ndagijimana had spent the whole of midday in a bistro located very close to this microfinance, in the commune's main town. In an attempt to disguise his crime, the criminal hid the victim's body in one of the rooms of the microfinance.

The same sources said that the perpetrator of the crime had almost been lynched by an incensed crowd, had it not been for the intervention of the local police, who dispersed the crowd with warning shots.

SOS-Torture Burundi deploras the recurrence of abuses committed by police officers following numerous cases of indiscipline due to lax supervision by their superiors. It is calling for a thorough investigation to uncover the real motives behind the crime and punish the perpetrator in accordance with the law.

- In the early hours of Thursday 25 May 2023, at around 5 a.m., a soldier called Raymond Ndayikeza (regimental number 86207), aged 27, stabbed to death his fellow soldier Belyse Tuyizere (regimental number 88748), aged 24, in the Hotel Amigo located in the Gikizi district of the Kamenge zone, in the urban commune of Ntakangwa in the municipality of Bujumbura (western Burundi), where the couple had spent the night together.

According to sources at the Hotel Amigo, the two soldiers of the 2nd class rank assigned to the Special Brigade for the Protection of Institutions (BSPI) stationed at the presidential palace had been in a romantic relationship for some time, and the victim even owed a sum of five hundred and fifty thousand Burundian francs

(550 Fbu) to his assassin. After slitting the victim's throat with a knife, Raymond Ndayikeza tried to sneak away from the scene of the crime, but was apprehended by hotel employees, who also seized the murder weapon after making the grisly report.

- On the morning of Saturday 27 May 2023, the dead body of a 6-year-old child, Trésor Niyonyishu, was discovered in a ditch on the banks of the Rwaba River at the foot of the Kabondo hill in the capital of the Nyanza-Lac commune of the Makamba province (southern Burundi).

Local sources say that the circumstances and the person responsible for his murder have not been identified.

2. Kidnapping or enforced disappearance

- On Tuesday 23 May 2023, a CNL party activist known as Phocas Niyubuntu was abducted by SNR agents, some of whom were wearing riot police uniforms, on the Buhinga hill in the Munini zone in the commune and province of Bururi (southern Burundi).

According to witnesses, Phocas Niyubuntu was quenching his thirst with friends in a local bistro when two men in civilian clothes arrested him and ruthlessly loaded him into a Toyota double-cabin van with tinted windows for an unknown destination.

Local sources report that members of Phocas Niyubuntu's family searched all the dungeons in Bururi province without success.

SOS-Torture Burundi denounces the political intolerance of the CNDD-FDD towards opposition party activists, particularly members of the CNL, and calls on the SNR authorities to disclose the whereabouts of Phocas Niyubuntu.



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.