

SOS-TORTURE BURUNDI REPORT NO. 395 PUBLISHED ON 8 JULY 2023

This report by SOS-Torture Burundi covers the period from 1st to 8 July 2023 concerning cases of human rights violations in Burundi.

At least four (4) people were murdered during this period in the provinces of Cibitoke and Rumonge.

The report also deplors the cases of six (6) Imbonerakure who were seriously injured in their violent clashes in the province of Cibitoke, one (1) policeman who was arbitrarily arrested in Bujumbura city and one (1) worker who is missing in the province of Rumonge.

1. Violations of the right to life

- On the afternoon of Sunday 2 July 2023, three lifeless bodies of Imbonerakure¹ were discovered by fishermen on the shores of the Rusizi River, on the border with the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), on the hill of Mparambo I, in the commune of Rugombo of the Cibitoke province (north-west Burundi).

According to local sources, the three bodies were among the victims of intense fighting between two groups of Imbonerakure on the Burundian shore of the Rusizi River on the night of 30 June to 1st July 2023 at around 1 a.m. The two groups, including one from the DRC in possession of jerry cans filled with fuel and loincloths, clashed fiercely with machetes during their night patrol. As a result, 6 people were also seriously injured and are receiving treatment at a health facility in Rugombo.

¹ A youth league affiliated to the CNDD-FDD party (National Council for the Defence of Democracy-Forces for the Defence of Democracy).

- On the night of Sunday 2 July 2023, a man known as Salvator Ntihabose succumbed to the blows and wounds inflicted on him on 29 June 2023 by Imbonerakure on the hill of Gatete, in the commune and province of Rumonge (south-west Burundi).

According to police sources, Salvator Ntihabose was severely beaten by Imbonerakure on charges of stealing palm fruit before being taken to a police cell in the Gatete zone.

The same sources said that a judicial police officer (OPJ) named Pierre Nkongoro was arrested on 3 July 2023 and is being held at the provincial police station in Rumonge for failing to inform his superiors of the detention of this man, who finally succumbed to his injuries in the police cell. The victim's body is in the Rumonge hospital morgue awaiting burial.

SOS-Torture Burundi denounces the impunity surrounding the human rights abuses attributed to the Imbonerakure who, in this case, have not been prosecuted for the acts of torture that led to the death of Salvator Ntihabose. It calls for a thorough investigation to arrest the alleged perpetrators of his death and punish them in accordance with the law.

2. Kidnapping or enforced disappearance

- Didier Bimenyimana, a worker at the “Complexe Industriel de Karonda²” (CIKAR) in the commune and province of Rumonge (south-west Burundi), has been missing since Monday 3 July 2023.

According to CIKAR sources, Didier Bimenyimana was last seen fetching fodder for cows near Lake Tanganyika in the Kanyenkoko district of Rumonge province.

² Karonda Industrial Complex.

3. Violation of the right to freedom of movement: arbitrary arrest and detention

- On the morning of Thursday 6 July 2023, Jean-Claude Ndayisenga, a non-commissioned officer assigned to the Migration Police at Bujumbura International Airport (western Burundi), was arbitrarily arrested by agents of the National Intelligence Service (SNR) after the Honourable Agathon Rwasa, president of the CNL (National Congress for Freedom) party, had passed through on his way to Zanzibar in the United Republic of Tanzania. He was taken directly to the SNR dungeon at the service's headquarters on charges of having allowed Agathon Rwasa to cross national borders.

SOS-Torture Burundi denounces the arbitrary arrest of the policeman Jean-Claude Ndayisenga and calls for his immediate release, given that the president of the CNL party enjoys his civil and political rights, including his right to freedom of movement.

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.