



## SOS – Torture/Burundi

Monitoring sur les cas de torture, les arrestations arbitraires, les disparitions forcées et les exécutions sommaires au Burundi

### **SOS-TORTURE BURUNDI REPORT NO. 402 PUBLISHED ON 27 AUGUST 2023**

This report by SOS-Torture Burundi covers the period from 19 to 26 August 2023 concerning cases of human rights violations in Burundi.

At least eight (8) people were murdered during this period in various parts of the country.

#### **1. Violations of the right to life**

- According to information received by SOS-Torture Burundi, two lifeless bodies have been found in the commune of Bugendana in Gitega province (central Burundi), on the hills of Mutoyi and Runyeri respectively. The first body is that of Sylvain Niyonzima, aged 36, who was found on Tuesday 15 August 2023, hanging from a rope inside his home. The motive and circumstances of his death remain unclear, although the local administration has suggested that the victim committed suicide.

The second macabre discovery was made in a field of cassava and banana trees, where the body of Longin Ntibanyiha, aged 55, was found lying in a pool of blood. According to local sources, the victim fell into a group of Imbonerakure on night patrol who killed him with machetes and clubs after suspecting him of being a thief. The victim's body was hastily buried on the same day on the orders of the Runyeri hill chief, Roger Ngendakumana, without waiting for an investigation to be launched to identify the perpetrators of the murder and bring them to justice.

- On the afternoon of Sunday 20 August 2023, at around 5 p.m., cow herders discovered three lifeless bodies, including that of a woman, on the Rugomero sub-hill on the Rukana II hill, in the commune of Rugombo of Cibitoke province (north-west Burundi).

According to witnesses to the grisly discovery, all three bodies, still fresh, had been decapitated with machetes. The local administrator of Rugombo, Gilbert Manirakiza, ordered the Imbonerakure to bury the bodies immediately at the place where they were found, without however deigning to wait for an investigation, which would have been the priority in such circumstances.

Local security sources estimated that the victims were from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and that they had defended themselves in vain against their assailants, who were identifiable as Imbonerakure patrolling the Rusizi River separating Burundi from the DRC at night. The Imbonerakure ambush people entering Burundi via the Rusizi River from the Democratic Republic of Congo, killing them after stripping them of their belongings.

SOS-Torture Burundi deplores the impunity for crimes committed by the Imbonerakure, members of the youth league affiliated to the ruling CNDD-FDD (National Council for the Defence of Democracy-Forces for the Defence of Democracy). It calls for credible investigations to identify the perpetrators and punish them in accordance with the law.

- In the twilight of Sunday 20 August 2023, a man known as Herménégilde Manariyo, aged 46, was killed by a policeman called Jean Ndayiragije on the Cimbogo sub-hill on the Gatete hill, in the Gatere zone, in the Busoni commune of Kirundo province (northern Burundi).

According to witnesses, policeman Jean Ndayiragije tried to arrest four Rwandan nationals who had entered Burundi illegally, but encountered resistance from the local population as he was handcuffing the Rwandans. In the ensuing altercation, Jean Ndayiragije fired into the crowd and a bullet hit Herménégilde Manariyo, who died immediately, while the four Rwandans took the opportunity to return to their country in handcuffs.

The same sources said that the perpetrator of the murder was arrested and taken to the Busoni commune detention centre, before being transferred the following morning to the Kirundo judicial police station, where he was held in police custody pending trial in flagrante delicto.

- On the night of Tuesday 22 August 2023, a young man known as Eric Niyonkuru, aged 23, succumbed to blows and wounds inflicted on him by watchmen at the farm of former Burundian minister Déo Guide Rurema, located on the hill of Myugariro, in the commune of Muruta in the province of Kayanza (northern Burundi).

According to local sources, the watchmen spotted Eric Niyonkuru near the farm and violently beat him to death on the orders of the farm manager, Gérard Niyonzima, after suspecting him of being a thief. In the end, the torturers tried to evacuate Eric Niyonkuru to Kayanza hospital, but he died on the way. However, when they arrived at the hospital, they left the body in the vehicle and run away.

- On the night of Thursday 24 August 2023 at around 8 p.m., a young man known as Victor Niyomwungere, aged 18, succumbed to the blows and wounds inflicted on him by a policeman called Olivier Nkurunziza alias Cuma on the Musimbwe hill in the commune of Gisozi of the Mwaro province (central Burundi), in complicity with an Imbonerakure from the same hill, Désiré Nsabiyumva.

According to witnesses, Olivier Nkurunziza and Désiré Nsabiyumva found Victor Niyomwungere sitting on his motorbike taxi in the Kurubaho car park and demanded that he pay ten thousand Burundi francs (10,000 Fbu) as a bribe to the local police commissioner in Gisozi. When the young motorcyclist refused to give them the money, the two men pounced on him, throwing him to the ground and violently beating him until he lost consciousness. Local residents tried to intervene, but in vain, as policeman Olivier Nkurunziza immediately opened fire to disperse

the crowd. The victim was evacuated to the Clinic Ubuntu de Tora hospital in the commune of Mugamba in the province of Bururi.

The same sources stated that the two perpetrators of the crime, Olivier Nkurunziza and Désiré Nsabiyumva, remain free despite the seriousness of the crime committed in the presence of the public.

SOS-Torture Burundi is calling for a judicial enquiry to be opened in order to arrest the perpetrators and punish them in accordance with the law.

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.