

SOS-TORTURE BURUNDI REPORT NO. 404 PUBLISHED ON 10 SEPTEMBER 2023

This report by SOS-Torture Burundi covers the period from 2 to 9 September 2023 concerning cases of human rights violations in Burundi.

During this period, at least two (2) men died in a dungeon at the police station in Cibitoke province as a result of lack of food and poor prison conditions.

The report also deplores the case of three (3) men who were abducted by members of the Burundi National Police (PNB) in Bujumbura town and Cibitoke province.

1. Violations of the right to life

- In the space of just two days, Pierre Mpawenayo (aged 37) and Marcel Nduwimana (aged 34) died respectively on 5 and 7 September 2023 in the dungeon of the police station in the province of Cibitoke (north-west Burundi) as a result of lack of food and poor prison conditions.

According to local sources, Pierre Mpawenayo, from the Ngoma hill and zone in the Murwi commune, and Marcel Nduwimana, from the Shimwe hill in the Rusenda zone in the Bukinanyana commune, were accused of household theft. They died of hunger due to their distance from family members who should have brought them food. These deaths occurred in a general context of violation of the basic rights of people detained in police cells, where there are no food services for detainees. This general problem is exacerbated by unprecedented prison overcrowding, with 130 detainees crammed into a cell designed to hold just 20 people.

SOS-Torture Burundi is asking the country's authorities, in this case the President of the Republic, to set up as soon as possible a service responsible for restoring police cells and to find mechanisms to relieve overcrowding in detention centers .

2. Cases of abduction or enforced disappearance

- On the morning of Wednesday 6 September 2023, at around 11 a.m., a veterinarian known as Désiré Sindayigaya was abducted from the hill and zone of Buringa in the commune of Gihanga of the Bubanza province (north-west Burundi) by individuals in Burundi National Police (PNB) uniforms in a white double-cabin van with tinted windows and driven to an unknown destination.

According to witnesses, his kidnappers found him in a local veterinary pharmacy where he was buying some medicine and pretended to ask for his services before taking him away in their vehicle.

Since that day, members of his family have tried in vain to contact him by telephone and have searched for him without success in all the dungeons in the province of Bubanza and the Bujumbura town.

- On the afternoon of Thursday 7 September 2023, at around 12.30 pm, Céleus Manirakiza was abducted by unidentified individuals in police uniform who found him at the Top One petrol station in the Gihosha area of the Ntakangwa urban district, in the Bujumbura town hall (western Burundi) and took him to an unknown destination.

Since the day Céleus Manirakiza was abducted, members of his family have tried to search for him in every dungeon in the economic capital Bujumbura, but to no avail.

- On the afternoon of Friday 8 September 2023 at around 2 p.m., Pastor Samuel Mukeshimana, legal representative of the Elayon Church in the commune of

Gihanga of the Bubanza province, was abducted from his brick-making workplace in village 5 in the commune of Mpanda by unidentified individuals in a Toyota Hilux double-cabin van with tinted windows but no number plates, and driven to an unknown destination.

According to local sources, Pasteur Samuel Mukeshimana, who is originally from Rwanda but has lived in Burundi for several years, runs a church that was considered to be close to former prime minister Alain-Guillaume Bunyoni, who is currently being held in Gitega prison and liked to visit the congregation's followers.

The members of his family are worried about the fate of Pastor Samuel Mukeshimana, as they do not know who his kidnappers are or where he is being held. This abduction comes at a time when, since the arrest of Alain-Guillaume Bunyoni, Pastor Samuel Mukeshimana has been living as a person under surveillance. He saw people watching his every move.

SOS-Torture Burundi deplors the upsurge in cases of abduction and enforced disappearance since last month and calls on the authorities of the PNB and the National Intelligence Service (SNR) to disclose the whereabouts of Désiré Sindayigaya, Céleus Manirakiza and Pastor Samuel Mukeshimana. It calls on the heads of these state services to put an end to the abductions that are often used as methods of arrest.



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.