

SOS-TORTURE BURUNDI REPORT NO. 405 PUBLISHED ON 17 SEPTEMBER 2023

This report by SOS-Torture Burundi covers the period from 9 to 16 September 2023 concerning cases of human rights violations in Burundi.

During this period, at least two (2) people were murdered in the provinces of Bubanza and Bururi.

The report also deplores the case of an elderly woman who was severely tortured by soldiers at the Mudubugu camp in the Gihanga commune of Bubanza province.

1. Violations of the right to life

- On the night of Tuesday to Wednesday 13 September 2023, an elderly woman known as Jacqueline Nahishakiye, aged 75, was brutally murdered by unidentified individuals who found her at her home on the Rugunga hill in the commune of Gihanga, in the province of Bubanza (north-west Burundi).

According to witnesses to the macabre discovery, the body of the victim, decapitated with a machete, lay in a pool of still-fresh blood.

SOS-Torture Burundi deplores the resurgence of targeted killings of people in the provinces of Bubanza and Cibitoke, particularly in the border communes of Gihanga and Buganda, and calls on the administrative and police authorities to take appropriate measures to curb this criminal phenomenon, which is becoming increasingly worrying.

- On the night of Sunday 10 September 2023, a watchman from the Anglican church in the diocese of Matana in the province of Bururi (southern Burundi) was murdered and decapitated with machetes by unidentified individuals.

According to local sources, after committing this heinous crime, the criminals broke into the parish offices and stole five computers.

The same sources said that two other computers were stolen on the same night from a household near the diocese, and local residents believe that the same criminals were responsible.

2. Violation of the right to physical integrity

- On Monday 11 September 2023, an elderly woman known as Julienne Manirakiza was severely beaten by soldiers from the Mudubugu camp in the commune of Gihanga of the Bubanza province (north-west Burundi) while she was in her cassava field near the military camp.

According to local sources, the victim was immediately evacuated to a private hospital close to the crime scene, called "Chez David", where he was hospitalised.

According to the same sources, there is a land dispute between the Mudubugu military camp and the surrounding population, rooted in the government's desire to forcibly expropriate the land of private individuals located in the vicinity of this military camp. As a result, soldiers hunt down anyone who ventures into their fields for any reason whatsoever and inflict atrocious acts of torture on them to punish them for their audacity.

SOS-Torture Burundi calls on the Burundian authorities to read and apply the law correctly before taking any action to expropriate land in the public interest. Article 36 of the Constitution authorises expropriation, subject to fair and prior compensation. The same is true of the Land Code, the laws and conventions ratified by Burundi, the African Charter of Human Rights and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. All these texts authorise expropriation subject to fair and prior compensation. It is therefore inconceivable that citizens who work their

land should be mistreated by state services when they have not been legally expropriated.

It calls on the military authorities to instruct the commander of the Mudubugu military camp to allow the surrounding population to use their land peacefully until they have received fair and prior compensation following a fair procedure for expropriation in the public interest.

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.