

SOS-TORTURE BURUNDI REPORT NO. 420 PUBLISHED ON 31 DECEMBER 2023

This report by SOS-Torture Burundi covers the period from 23 to 30 December 2023 concerning cases of human rights violations in Burundi.

During this period, at least four (4) people were murdered in different parts of the country.

The report also deplores the case of three (3) people who were seriously injured following blows and wounds inflicted on them by Imbonerakure from the youth league affiliated to the ruling party, the CNDD-FDD (National Council for the Defence of Democracy-Forces for the Defence of Democracy).

1. Violations of the right to life

- On Saturday 23 December 2023, an unidentified man was murdered by Imbonerakure at the Muhafu market on the Shembe hill in the Muzye zone, in the commune of Giharo of the Rutana province (south-east Burundi).

According to witnesses to the macabre scene, the victim was first arrested by Imbonerakure led by one of the local councillors, Josué, on charges of stealing a mobile phone from the Muhafu market. They then took her to the foot of the Gatonga hill in the same zone and, a few moments later, they were seen bringing her lifeless body back.

The same sources said that the body of the deceased was buried the next day by Imbonerakure on the orders of the Giharo local authority, without any investigation to identify the victim and his torturers so that they could be brought to justice and punished in accordance with the law.

SOS-Torture Burundi deplores the impunity surrounding all the crimes committed by the Imbonerakure, particularly in the commune of Giharo, where two people have just been murdered in less than a week. These Imbonerakure benefit from the support or complicity of the administrative authorities or CNDD-FDD leaders, which perpetuates the phenomenon of impunity that has corrupted Burundi's judicial system and accentuates the bloodshed crimes that continue to be perpetrated throughout the country.

- On the night of Sunday 24 December 2023, at around 11 p.m., an Imbonerakure known as Lamech Niyonkuru, alias Pendo, was shot dead by a policeman called Eric on the Muriza hill, in the commune of Butaganzwa of the Ruyigi province (eastern Burundi), around 50 metres from the commune's main town.

According to local sources, after sharing a beer, Lamech Niyonkuru first quarrelled with the policeman from Butaganzwa station, who then rushed back to his headquarters to get his service rifle. On his return, almost simultaneously, policeman Eric fired several bullets at Lamech Niyonkuru, who died on the spot.

The same sources said that the murderer was subsequently arrested and taken to the police lock-up in Ruyigi province for investigation.

- On the morning of Tuesday 26 December 2023, at around 6 a.m., the lifeless body of a young man known as Eric Ndayishimiye, aged 23, was found in a gutter on the Mugweji sub-hill of the Birimba district, in the commune and province of Rumonge (south-west Burundi).

According to local sources, the victim's body showed no signs of violence, and the perpetrators and circumstances of his death remain unclear.

The same sources said that the victim was buried the same day by family members for lack of funds to pay the mortuary costs.

- On the evening of Thursday 28 December 2023 at around 6.30 p.m., the lifeless body of a young man known as Elie Misigaro, aged 31, was discovered by local residents on the 7th transversal of the Karurama sub-hill on the Cibitoke hill, in the commune of Rugombo of the Cibitoke province (north-west Burundi).

According to witnesses to the gruesome discovery, Elie Misigaro, known in the locality as a radio and television repairman, was clubbed to death by as yet unidentified individuals, who also took care to strip him of all his belongings.

According to local sources, the residents of Karurama suspect the Imbonerakure of this locality of being behind the murder of Elie Misigaro, one of whom had spent the day with him sharing a glass of beer together. The victim's body was taken to the morgue at Cibitoke hospital pending burial.

SOS-Torture Burundi is calling for a thorough investigation to uncover the perpetrators of Elie Misigaro's murder and punish them in accordance with the law.

2. Violations of the right to physical integrity

- On the night of Monday 25 December 2023, a CNL (National Congress for Freedom) party activist known as Pascal Ndereyimana was severely beaten and seriously injured by three Imbonerakure, Olivier Nduwimana, Déogratias Bakundumuhari and Léopold Niyongabo, on the hill of Bwoga, in the commune and province of Gitega (central Burundi).

According to local sources, Pascal Ndereyimana, who is also one of the elected representatives on the hill of Bwoga, was ambushed by Imbonerakure on a night patrol as he was returning to his home on the same hill. The Imbonerakure violently beat him and seriously injured his head to the point of unconsciousness.

The same sources said that the victim, who was attacked because of his political affiliation, was rushed to a local health facility for intensive care. However, although his assailants were clearly identified and his relatives filed a complaint with the police, no investigation has been opened to bring to justice the perpetrators of the serious bodily injuries inflicted on Pascal Ndereyimana. On the contrary, Olivier Nduwimana, Déogratias Bakundumuhari and Léopold Niyongabo continue to move about freely while their victim remains confined to his hospital bed.

SOS-Torture Burundi is calling for a thorough and impartial investigation to arrest these three Imbonerakure so that they can be punished in accordance with the law, and for the police and judicial authorities to break with the impunity that has become the rule for all crimes committed by the Imbonerakure.

- On the evening of Tuesday 26 December 2023, at around 6 p.m., two men known respectively as Macumi and Bagabo were violently beaten and seriously injured by the head of the Gikwiye hill, Michel Karibwami, in collusion with imbonerakure on the same hill in the Gasorwe zone and commune, in the province of Muyinga (north-east Burundi).

According to witnesses, on his way coming back visiting his wife in hospital at the Gasorwe health centre, Macumi heard cries of distress from a man who was being severely beaten. He found out that a man of the Twa ethnic group called Bagabo was being beaten to punish him for looking for firewood in a property that did not belong to him. When Macumi tried to intervene, the hill leader Michel Karibwami and the Imbonerakure accompanying him stopped beating Bagabo and attacked him. Macumi then received several blows all over his body, including his genitals, which were violently twisted and damaged.

The same sources said that Macumi was first evacuated to the Gasorwe health centre before being transferred the same day to Muyinga hospital due to the



SOS – Torture/Burundi

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

seriousness of the injuries he sustained. The state of health of the victim, who urinates blood when he goes to the toilet, remains very critical.

SOS-Torture Burundi is calling for an impartial investigation to arrest the perpetrators of the bodily harm with a view to punishing 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.