



## 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 N° 418 PUBLISHED ON 17 DECEMBER 2023**

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

During this period, at least three (3) people were murdered in different parts of the country.

The report also deplores one (1) case of a teacher at the Buta communal high school who was violently beaten and seriously injured by militants of the CNDD-FDD party (National Council for the Defence of Democracy-Forces for the Defence of Democracy) in the province of Rutana, as well as the case of two (2) influential members of the CNL party (National Congress for Freedom) who were arbitrarily arrested and detained in the province of Cibitoke. Finally, the report criticises one (1) case of abduction, with the risk of enforced disappearance, of a teacher at the “Ecole Normale Supérieure” (ENS) in Bujumbura city.

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

- According to information received by SOS-Torture Burundi, the lifeless body of Sylvère Ndayitwayeko, aged 66, was discovered on Friday 9 December 2023 at around 7 p.m. in a cedar grove on the Mibira sub-hill of Burarana hill, in the commune and province of Bururi (southern Burundi).

According to local sources, Sylvère Ndayitwayeko, a resident of the neighbouring Mahonda hill, was strangled by unidentified assailants while having his hair done in a local hairdressing salon. The victim's body was taken to the Bururi hospital morgue pending burial.

SOS-Torture Burundi deplores the upsurge in crime in Bururi province, where two bodies have been discovered in less than two weeks, and calls on the local police

to launch a thorough investigation to establish the circumstances and the perpetrators of the death of Sylvère Ndayitwayeko.

- On the night of Sunday to Monday, 11 December 2023, at around 12.10 a.m., a man known as Jean Marie Hakizimana was killed by unidentified armed men during an attack on the RN5 at the Kajeke river bridge in the commune of Gihanga of the Bubanza province (north-west Burundi). The attack was aimed at destroying the bridge, which links the province of Cibitoke to other regions in western Burundi.

According to local sources, Jean Marie Hakizimana and two other men, including Ismaël Nkurunziza, were first taken hostage in the Rukoko natural reserve by these armed men on the night of Saturday 9 December 2023 to help them transport food.

SOS-Torture Burundi has learned that Ismaël Nkurunziza was arrested the same night by the police, who took him into custody at the local police station in Gihanga as part of an investigation.

- At around 5 a.m. on Wednesday 13 December 2023, the lifeless body of a man called Zephaniah, aged 50, was discovered on the hill and in the Mudende zone, in the commune of Buyengero of the Rumonge province (south-west Burundi).

According to local sources, the victim's body was found near his home, but there were no signs of violence.

SOS-Torture Burundi is calling for a thorough investigation to identify the circumstances and the perpetrators of the murder so that they can be brought to justice.

### 2. Violation of the right to physical integrity

- On the night of Sunday 10 December 2023 at around 8 p.m., a teacher named Benoît from the Buta Communal High School, in the commune and province of Rutana (south-east Burundi), was violently beaten and seriously injured by three members of the CNDD-FDD party. These were a certain Mfuranzima (the party's hill leader on Gitaba hill), Claver (head of the Imbonerakure youth league on the same hill) and Damien Nkinahamira (head of Gitaba hill).

According to witnesses, the three men seized Benoît and took him to the zone office to torture him atrociously. They left him in a very critical state.

The same sources said that the three men were arrested the next day and taken into custody, before being released three days later on the orders of the governor of Rutana province, Olivier Nibitanga,

SOS-Torture Burundi denounces the impunity enjoyed by members of the CNDD-FDD since its accession to power, which perpetuates a poisonous climate surrounding human rights issues under the current government in Burundi.

### 3. Violations of the right to freedom of movement: arbitrary arrests and detentions

- On Sunday 10 December 2023, Christophe Banyankiyubusa and Sandrine Nshimirimana, respectively in charge of the CNL party in the commune of Rugombo and representative of the women's league on the hill of Mparambo I in the same commune of the Cibitoke province (north-west Burundi), were arbitrarily arrested by the police on unreasonable charges of holding a clandestine meeting at their party headquarters without authorisation from the authorities.

According to local sources, the two influential CNL party activists in the commune of Rugombo were busy cleaning up at their party's headquarters when they were unjustly accused of holding a meeting without administrative approval.

The same sources said that the two victims were taken to the communal and provincial police cells respectively, where they have since been incarcerated. These arbitrary arrests come against a backdrop of political intolerance in the run-up to the 2025 elections, where the CNL party has just spent more than six months under the abusive sanctions of nationwide suspension of all party activities imposed by the Minister of the Interior, Community Development and Public Security following internal disagreements.

SOS-Torture Burundi deplores the continuing acts of political intolerance by the ruling CNDD-FDD against opposition party activists, in this case those of the CNL, and calls for the immediate release of these two activists who have been wrongfully detained.

#### **4. Kidnapping or enforced disappearance**

- At around 1 p.m. on Wednesday 13 December 2023, Eng. Samuel Rudahinyuka, a teacher at the "Ecole Normale Supérieure" (ENS) and doctoral student at the University of Burundi, was abducted near the Kamenge campus at the end of classes at the doctoral school just as he was about to get into his car.

According to witnesses, his kidnappers were in a white Toyota Hilux double cabin van with tinted windows and no number plates.

Local sources said that, in the aftermath, members of his family tried to call his telephone number, which initially rang without being picked up, before being switched off. They do not know where Eng. Samuel Rudahinyuka has gone, and suspect that agents of the National Intelligence Service (SNR) are the kidnappers,



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given the circumstances and methods of his abduction, which have already been used by this service, which is notorious for kidnappings and enforced disappearances in 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.