



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. 419 PUBLISHED ON 24 DECEMBER 2023

This report by SOS-Torture Burundi covers the period from 16 to 23 December 2023 concerning cases of human rights violations in Burundi.

During this period, at least thirty-three (33) people were murdered in different localities in the country, including 27 who died in an armed attack claimed by the Resistance Movement for the Rule of Law (RED-Tabara), while sixteen (16) others were seriously injured in the same attack.

The report also deplores the case of six (6) CNL (National Congress for Freedom) party activists who were arbitrarily arrested and detained in Ngozi province.

1. Violations of the right to life

- On the morning of Friday 15 December 2023, at around 8 a.m., two lifeless bodies of men in FARDC (Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of Congo) military uniform were discovered by farmers on their way to their fields near the Rusizi river, on the 7th transverse of Kaburantwa hill, in the commune of Buganda of the Cibitoke province (north-west Burundi).

According to local sources, the bodies are those of Burundian army soldiers who drowned in the Rusizi river when they tried to cross it on their way to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

The same sources said that the local administration, in collaboration with the military hierarchy, gave the order to bury the bodies at the place where they were found, without any investigation to identify the victims and the circumstances of their death.

- On the morning of Wednesday 20 December 2023, the lifeless body of an unidentified man was discovered near the Buzimba river, at the foot of the Gitwe hill

in the Buruhukiro zone of the commune and province of Rumonge (south-west of the country).

According to local sources, the motive and circumstances surrounding the murder of the man in his sixties in this locality have not been determined.

- On the morning of Wednesday 20 December 2023, the lifeless body of Juvénal Ngabirano, aged around forty, was found in the Nkaka river between the commune of Mwumba and the commune and province of Ngozi (northern Burundi).

According to witnesses to the gruesome discovery, the victim's body showed signs of violence on the neck, proving that the 40-year-old had been strangled to death by unidentified assailants.

- On the afternoon of Wednesday 20 December 2023, at around 2.30 p.m., the decomposing body of an unidentified man was discovered on the banks of the Murembwe river on the Mutambara hill of the Gatete zone, in the commune and province of Rumonge (south-west Burundi).

According to local sources, the victim's body was buried on the same day on the orders of the Rumonge local authority, without waiting for an investigation to identify the victim, the perpetrators and the circumstances of his murder.

SOS-Torture Burundi deplors the resurgence of the phenomenon of lifeless bodies found in various localities, abandoned in or on rivers and their surroundings. It calls on the country's authorities, in this case the President of the Republic, to demand credible and independent investigations to uncover the perpetrators of these targeted killings, which have become recurrent, and thus put an end to this phenomenon, which has become intractable.

- On the afternoon of Thursday 21 December 2023, a young man named Josué succumbed to his injuries after being beaten by a group of Imbonerakure led by a certain Bernard Nibizi on the Butezi hill in the commune of Giharo of the Rutana province (south-east Burundi).

According to local sources, Josué was tied up and violently beaten to death on the orders of Bernard Nibizi, head of the Imbonerakure youth league in the commune of Giharo. He succumbed to his injuries a few hours after being taken to hospital.

The same sources said that the head of the CNDD-FDD (National Council for the Defence of Democracy-Forces for the Defence of Democracy), Sylvain Nzikoruriho, and the local administrator of Giharo, Lydia Nihimbazwe, ordered Josué's father to proceed immediately with his burial on his land, despite his protest demanding that the perpetrators of the crime be brought to justice.

SOS-Torture Burundi deploras the impunity that systematically surrounds all crimes committed by the Imbonerakure throughout the country. It calls on the Head of State to put an end to the impunity enjoyed by the Imbonerakure in particular and CNDD-FDD militants in general.

- On the night of Friday 22 December 2023, at around 8.30 p.m., an armed attack subsequently claimed by the Resistance for the Rule of Law (RED-Tabara) movement on its official X account (@Red_Tabara) resulted in the deaths of at least twenty-seven (27) people, including 20 civilians, 4 policemen and 3 soldiers who were guarding the Vugizo border post in the Gatumba area, in the commune of Mutimbuzi in the province of Bujumbura (western Burundi), close to the border with the DRC (Democratic Republic of Congo).

According to local sources, sixteen (16) other people, including 3 soldiers and 2 policemen, were seriously injured in the attack and have been evacuated to various health facilities in the city of Bujumbura where they are receiving intensive care.

SOS-Torture Burundi deplores the fact that the lives of peaceful citizens have been snuffed out by armed men in this murderous attack in the Gatumba zone, and expresses its solidarity and compassion for the victims and their families, who no longer know which way to turn in a country where the authorities constantly proclaim that peace and security reign throughout the national territory. It calls on the State of Burundi to genuinely protect its population and to engage in genuine negotiations with all the political players in order to restore peace and security throughout the country.

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

- On Saturday 23 December 2023, six CNL party activists were arbitrarily arrested by the police on the Gatika hill of the Rukeco zone, in the Busiga commune of Ngozi province (northern Burundi). They are Léonard Ndikumasabo, Denise Ndayikengurukiye, Médiatrice Bizimana, Simon Misago, Donatien Bihute and Raphaël Niyobuhungiro.

According to local sources, the six activists were at a meeting of their association when they were caught by the police, who accused them of holding an illegal party meeting.

According to the same sources, the six CNL activists were first taken to the Rukeco zone cell before being transferred during the night of the same day at around 9 p.m. to the Judicial Police detention centre in Ngozi.

SOS-Torture Burundi deplores the persistence of a climate of political intolerance on the part of the CNDD-FDD (National Council for the Defence of Democracy- Forces for the Defence of Democracy) towards opposition parties, particularly in the run-up to the 2025 elections.



SOS – Torture/Burundi

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

It calls for the immediate release of these CNL activists, who are being unjustly imprisoned in violation of their constitutional right to freedom of association and assembly.

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.