

## **SOS-TORTURE BURUNDI REPORT NO. 416 PUBLISHED ON 03 DECEMBER 2023**

This report by SOS-Torture Burundi covers the period from 25 November to 02 December 2023 concerning cases of human rights violations in Burundi.

During this period, at least four (4) people, including a girl who was raped before being murdered, were assassinated in different parts of the country.

The report also deplores the case of three (3) people who were seriously injured by soldiers in the province of Rumonge, as well as the cases of three (3) people who were abducted by agents of the Burundi National Police (PNB) and the National Intelligence Service (SNR) in the provinces of Ngozi and Bujumbura respectively.

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

- On 26 November 2023, the lifeless body of 15-year-old Inès Niyongere, a pupil in grade 8 at the Basic School (ECOFO) in Muramvya III, was discovered on the Kayogoro hillside in the commune and province of Muramvya (central Burundi).

According to witnesses to the gruesome discovery, traces found on the victim's body prove that she had been raped before being horribly murdered.

SOS-Torture Burundi deplores the resurgence of crimes of a sexual nature or linked to gender-based violence, particularly in the school environment where certain teachers are singled out. What is staggering and perpetuates the commission of these crimes is that some of the perpetrators, most of whom are teachers and members of the CNDD-FDD<sup>1</sup>, enjoy impunity or spend some time in detention before regaining their freedom, generally as a result of pressure exerted

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<sup>1</sup> National Council for the Defence of Democracy-Forces for the Defence of Democracy.

by senior members of this party on judges or officers of the public prosecutor's office.

It calls for a thorough and impartial investigation to identify the perpetrators and bring them to justice. It also calls for administrative, legal and judicial measures to be taken as a matter of urgency or reinforced to discourage this deviant behaviour and protect Burundian girls and women from this scourge, which is becoming commonplace in society.

- On Monday 26 November 2023, Adrien Sibomana, aged 37, died in Mpanda hospital as a result of blows and wounds inflicted on him by police agents and Imbonerakure on the Masha hill in the commune of Mpanda of the Bubanza province (north-west Burundi).

According to witnesses, Adrien Sibomana, a former CNL<sup>2</sup> party activist who had just spent two months in hiding with the CNDD-FDD, was severely beaten by policemen and Imbonerakure, including one Eric Nzambimana, considered to be the main perpetrator of the crime, who were looking for distillers of a highly alcoholic home-made drink called "Kanyanga".

SOS-Torture Burundi calls on the police and judicial authorities in the province of Bubanza to conduct credible, impartial and meticulous investigations with a view to identifying all the policemen and Imbonerakure involved in these atrocious acts of torture which led to the death of Adrien Sibomana and to punish them in accordance with the law.

- On the night of Tuesday 28 November 2023, at around 9.30 p.m., the local representative of the CNDD-FDD, Ernest Niyongabo, aged around thirty, was stabbed to death by as yet unidentified individuals on the Bubanda hill in the commune of Rutegama, in the province of Muramvya (central Burundi).

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<sup>2</sup> National Congress for Freedom.

According to local sources, Ernest Niyongabo was killed on his way back from a local bistro where he had spent the evening, and his body showed several head wounds.

The same sources specified that the motives and circumstances of the crime have not been determined.

SOS-Torture Burundi is calling for a thorough investigation to uncover the perpetrators of the murder and bring them to justice so that they can be punished in accordance with the law.

- On the night of Friday 30 November 2023, at around 7 p.m., a woman known as Béatrice Butoyi, aged 65, was stabbed to death at her home on the Muhanga hill in the Rwuya zone of the Muhanga commune, in the Kayanza province (northern Burundi).

According to the victim's neighbours, who intervened after the crime was committed, Béatrice Butoyi's body was lying in a pool of blood outside her home, with injuries to the shoulder blade.

The same sources state that the perpetrators and motives for this murder have not been identified.

SOS-Torture Burundi is calling for a thorough and impartial investigation to uncover the perpetrators and punish them in accordance with the law.

## 2. Violations of the right to physical integrity

- On the night of Wednesday 28 November 2023 at around 8 p.m., around fifteen soldiers from the Rumonge camp (south-west Burundi) on night patrol attacked people they met as they passed, whom they unjustly accused of disrupting their line-up. Three people were seriously injured as a result of the blows and wounds inflicted on them, and were evacuated to Rumonge hospital where they were admitted for emergency intensive care. Two of the victims have been identified. They are Enock Karabona, a teacher at the Urban Communal High School of Rumonge, and Marie Nahayo, a young girl at the Etoile de Rumonge High School.

According to witnesses, some of the victims were nevertheless able to clear their names by paying a sum of ten thousand Burundian francs (10,000 BuF) in the form of an unfounded fine.

SOS-Torture Burundi condemns the behaviour of certain members of the defence and security forces who engage in acts of disturbance of public order, security and peace against peaceful citizens, and deplores the attitude of the hierarchical authorities who take no action to curb the excesses of certain undisciplined members. At the same time, it calls on the military authorities at Rumonge camp to carry out credible and thorough investigations with a view to identifying the perpetrators of these acts of torture and punishing them in accordance with the law.

## 3. Cases of abduction or enforced disappearance

- On Thursday 29 November 2023, a REGIDESO agent<sup>3</sup> known as Eric Ndayishimiye was abducted from his office by the head of the SNR in Bujumbura

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<sup>3</sup> Burundi's Water and Electricity Production and DISTRIBUTION Company.

town (western Burundi), police colonel Eliphaz Niyongabo, who took him to an unknown destination.

According to witnesses, when the victim was arrested, Eliphaz Niyongabo did not show a wanted notice or arrest warrant, nor did he explain why he had been arrested or where he was going.

SOS-Torture Burundi denounces the illegal abduction practices in vogue at the SNR, which are used as methods of arrest. It is concerned about the fate of Eric Ndayishimiye, who is at risk of enforced disappearance, like other victims who were arrested by Eliphaz Niyongabo in similar circumstances in several parts of the country and who are still missing.

- On the morning of Saturday, December 02, 2023, at around 11 a.m, Jonas Nahimana, head of the CNL party in Ngozi province (Northern Burundi), and the office cleaner at the party office were abducted by the provincial police commissioner in the province and taken to an unknown destination.

According to local sources, Jonas Nahimana was coordinating the move of the party's equipment from the old office to a new one. These activities were disrupted by policemen accompanied by Imbonerakure who arrived in a hurry, even though the removal activities had been announced to the Ngozi provincial administration.

According to the same sources, Jonas Nahimana and the office cleaner were released during the afternoon of the same day.

SOS-Torture Burundi denounces the persistence of acts of political intolerance by members of the CNDD-FDD towards activists of opposition political parties, particularly those of the CNL, and calls on the country's authorities, in this case the Head of State, to clean up the political climate so that all citizens can peacefully enjoy all their fundamental rights enshrined in the Burundi Constitution and in other laws emanating from it. It also deplores the fact that the Burundian police are conspicuously biased against the CNDD-FDD despite the relevant provisions of



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the constitution and the laws and regulations governing the Burundi National Police (PNB), which formally prohibit members of this force from expressing their political preferences (see in particular article 250 of the Constitution of the Republic of 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.

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