

SOS-TORTURE BURUNDI REPORT NO. 417 PUBLISHED ON 10 DECEMBER 2023

This report by SOS-Torture Burundi covers the period from 2 to 9 December 2023 concerning cases of human rights violations in Burundi.

During this period, at least six (6) people were murdered in various parts of the country.

1. Violations of the right to life

- According to information received by SOS-Torture Burundi, the lifeless body of Bernard Nishirimbere, aged 27, was discovered on Thursday 30 November 2023 in a cedar grove on the Taba hill in the zone, commune and province of Bururi (southern Burundi).

According to witnesses to the gruesome discovery, the victim's body was lying next to two crates of Primus beer he was carrying, and the circumstances of his death remain unclear. Those close to Bernard Nishirimbere said that he had gone to a mini beer depot in Taba to buy beer for resale in detail.

SOS-Torture Burundi is asking the local police to initiate a preliminary investigation to establish the circumstances and the perpetrators of Bernard Nishirimbere's death.

- On 2 December 2023, the lifeless body of a 13-year-old pupil in year 4 at the ECOFO¹ in Bugera, known as Aimable Irakoze, was found by children looking for firewood in a eucalyptus grove on the Bugera hill in the commune of Ndava of the Mwaro province (central Burundi).

¹ Basic school.

According to witnesses to the macabre discovery, the decapitated body of the victim was covered in branches.

According to the same sources, the young boy had been missing since 28 November 2023 when he went to collect firewood in this woodland. The victim's body was buried the same day by his family, without any investigation being launched to discover the perpetrators and circumstances of this despicable crime.

- On the morning of Saturday 2 December 2023, the lifeless body of an unidentified young man was found on the shores of Lake Tanganyika at the foot of the Kinyinya I hill in the Rukaramu zone, in the commune of Mutimbuzi of the Bujumbura province (western Burundi).

According to local sources, the victim's body showed signs of violence around the neck, indicating that she had been strangled to death by unidentified assailants. The victim's body was evacuated by the local population to the mortuary of the Baho hospital in Kajaga on the orders of the chief of hill Kinyinya I.

- Over the weekend of Saturday to Sunday 3 December 2023, two lifeless bodies of unidentified men were discovered in the Gasenyi zone of Buganda commune, in the province of Cibitoke (north-west Burundi).

According to farmers who witnessed the fatal discovery, the first body of a decapitated man in his forties was found at around 8 a.m. on Saturday 2 December in a maize field on the 2nd transverse road in the Gasenyi zone, and the second body, also decapitated, was found at the same time on Sunday 3 December in a cassava field on the 4th transverse road in the same zone.

According to local sources, four members of the Imbonerakure militia, a youth league of the CNDD-FDD party², including Omar Ndayizeye and Wilson Gikoko,

² National Council for the Defence of Democracy-Forces for the Defence of Democracy.

have been fingered as the perpetrators of the double murder because they were seen sharing beer with the unidentified victims in this locality near the Rusizi River separating Burundi from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

The same sources stated that the two bodies were buried on the same day at the place where they were found, on the orders of the Buganda administrator, Pamphile Hakizimana.

SOS-Torture Burundi deplores the persistence of the phenomenon of unidentified bodies, most often decapitated, which are regularly discovered in the province of Cibitoke, abandoned in the Rusizi River or its surroundings or on wasteland. It calls on the administrative, police and judicial authorities to take appropriate measures to curb this criminal phenomenon, which has become intractable and of which the local population seriously suspects the Imbonerakure, who make nightly rounds in this locality. Moreover, some of them have been convicted in flagrante delicto trials by the Cibitoke High Court for similar acts.

- On the morning of Wednesday 6 December 2023, the lifeless body of a trader known as Samson Buzibori, aged 46, was found in a 6-metre deep ravine on the Nkanda hill in the Mutoyi zone, in the commune of Bugendana of the Gitega province (central Burundi).

According to witnesses to the gruesome discovery, the body of this father of 7 had wounds on the head and a knife was found near the victim. The victim was allegedly stabbed to death on the night of 5 december by as yet unidentified individuals, who ambushed him as he was returning home from the *Kukarukona* trading centre in the same locality. The body was then thrown into the ravine to disguise the crime.

The same sources stated that Samson Buzibori's body was buried on the same day after a judicial police officer had taken note, without waiting for the opening of

an investigation, which is mandatory in such a situation, to identify the perpetrators and the circumstances of the murder.

SOS-Torture Burundi deploras the resurgence of crime in several parts of the country and calls on the Government of Burundi to ensure the safety of the population and to curb the abuses that are regularly attributed to certain Imbonerakure and defence and security agents.

In particular, it calls on the police and judicial authorities in Gitega province to launch a thorough investigation with a view to uncovering the perpetrators of this murder and bringing them to justice.

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.