

SOS-TORTURE BURUNDI REPORT NO. 424 PUBLISHED ON 28 JANUARY 2024

This report by SOS-Torture Burundi covers the period from 20 to 27 January 2024 concerning cases of human rights violations in Burundi.

During this period, at least seven (7) people were murdered in various parts of the country.

1. Violations of the right to life

- On the afternoon of Monday 22 January 2024, the lifeless body of a young man known as Fiacre Nyenimana, from the Muhuzu hill in the commune and province of Rumonge (south-west Burundi), was found floating on the waters of Lake Tanganyika, at the foot of the Rutumo hill in the Minago zone, in the same commune of Rumonge.

According to local sources, although the local administrative authorities have put forward the hypothesis that the young man died by drowning, even before an investigation has been opened to determine the cause and circumstances of his death, members of Fiacre Nyenimana's family believe that he was killed elsewhere and that his body was then thrown into Lake Tanganyika in order to falsify any subsequent investigation.

SOS-Torture Burundi deplors the resurgence of targeted killings in Rumonge province and calls for a thorough and credible investigation to identify the perpetrators of the murder of Fiacre Nyenimana, as well as the cause, motive and circumstances of its commission, with a view to bringing them to justice.

- On the night of Wednesday 24 January 2024, a CNDD-FDD party activist¹ known as Évelyne Sahabo succumbed to the wounds inflicted on her on the night of 14 January 2024 by unidentified men, suspected of being members of the same party, who ambushed her as she was returning to her home on the Kigongo sub-hill on the Murembera hill, in the commune of Giharo of the Rutana province (south-east Burundi).

According to local sources, her attackers first threw stones at her head and then approached her to stab her in the thighs with knives. After this despicable act, Évelyne Sahabo was rescued by passers-by who took her to a local health facility, before being taken back to her home to continue receiving outpatient treatment.

According to the same sources, Évelyne Sahabo's neighbours suspect the CNDD-FDD secretary for the Kigongo sub-hill, Espérance Ndiritiro, of being behind this despicable act because she had warned her the day before of the danger she was running in her stubborn attempt to help with the funeral and mourning ceremonies for the newborn son of Lionel Habonimana, a member of the CNL party². It should be noted that, on 13 January 2024, Espérance and Amos Bizimana, the chief of the Murembera hill, had initially forbidden the burial of the body of the newborn as long as his father had not joined the CNDD-FDD.

SOS-Torture Burundi deplores the rise in political intolerance, which has gone so far as to poison neighbourly relations between residents of the same locality, including members of the ruling CNDD-FDD party. It calls on the judicial authorities to conduct an independent and thorough investigation to identify the perpetrators of the crime and punish them in accordance with the law.

- In the early hours of Thursday 25 January 2024, Antoine Nimpagaritse, a prisoner in Bururi central prison (southern Burundi), succumbed to his illness after the prison health service refused to take him to an appropriate health facility, in this case Bururi hospital.

¹ National Council for the Defence of Democracy-Forces for the Defence of Democracy.

² National Congress for Freedom.

According to local sources, Antoine Nimpagaritse, aged 50 and originally from the hill of Tora in the commune of Mugamba, in the same province of Bururi, had been arrested on 14 November 2023 on murder charges. He had just been transferred to Bururi prison on 15 January 2024 after spending several weeks in custody at the provincial police station in that province.

SOS-Torture Burundi is calling on the Minister responsible for prisons to issue clear instructions to ensure that the rights of people deprived of their liberty are respected, including the right to health of detainees, and to conduct credible, thorough and independent investigations with a view to the criminal and administrative prosecution of all those involved in violations of these rights.

- On the morning of Thursday 25 January 2024, three lifeless bodies of unidentified men wearing Burundi National Police (PNB) uniforms were discovered in the Kibira forest on the Ruhembe hill of the Bumba zone, in the commune of Bukinanyana of the Cibitoke province (north-west Burundi).

According to the forest rangers who witnessed the macabre discovery, the three decomposing bodies were bound and tied separately to a tree.

According to local sources, the three policemen were killed in a clash between imbonerakure (members of the youth league affiliated to the CNDD-FDD) and policemen during a night patrol.

SOS-Torture Burundi deplors the fact that the three bodies were immediately buried by the Imbonerakure on the orders of the Bukinanyana communal administrator, Christian Nkurikiye, without waiting for an investigation that would have identified the victims and perpetrators of the triple crime.

- On the morning of Friday 26 January 2024, at around 10 a.m., the lifeless body of a young woman known as Jacqueline Nsavyimana, aged 35, was found decapitated at her home on the Bihaha sub-hill on the Gasenyi hill, in the commune of Buganda of the Cibitoke the province (north-west Burundi), after having been raped by unidentified criminals.



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According to witnesses to the horrific discovery, the body of the mother of three young children, who was found naked, lay in a pool of still-fresh blood.

SOS-torture Burundi is calling for a thorough investigation to identify the perpetrators of this heinous crime and for them to be punished 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.

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