

SOS-TORTURE BURUNDI REPORT NO. 425 PUBLISHED ON 4 FEBRUARY 2024

This report by SOS-Torture Burundi covers the period from 27 January to 3 February 2024 concerning cases of human rights violations in Burundi.

During this period, at least two (2) people were seriously injured in the province of Mwaro.

The report also deplores the case of one (1) employee of the "Mutuelle de la Fonction Publique"¹ (MFP) who was arbitrarily arrested and detained in the Military Police lock-up in Bujumbura city by Lieutenant-Colonel Melchiade Ntirampeba and that of one (1) CNL (National Congress for Freedom) party activist who was kidnapped in Bubanza province.

1. Violations of the right to physical integrity

- On the night of Thursday 2 February 2024, at around midnight, Pascal Ndakoraniwe alias Djuma and his wife Floride Nshimirimana were seriously injured with machetes by as yet unidentified individuals in an attack on their home on the Bukwavu sub-hill of the Kiyeye hill, in the Rusaka commune of the Mwaro province (central Burundi).

According to the testimony of the victims' neighbours, the bandits first broke down the door of their house and then went inside to wound them with machetes. They left after stealing sheep and chickens from the household.

According to the same sources, the two victims were taken to Fota district hospital where they are receiving intensive care.

¹ Public Service Mutual Insurance.

SOS-Torture Burundi is calling on the local police to open a preliminary investigation to identify the perpetrators and bring them to justice.

2. Violation of the right to freedom of movement: arbitrary arrest and detention

- Since 29 January 2024, an employee of the Mutuelle de la Fonction Publique (MFP), known as Emile Nikobiri, has been arbitrarily detained in a Military Police cell in Bujumbura city (western Burundi) after being arrested on the same day by Lieutenant-Colonel Melchiade Ntirampeba, aide-de-camp to the deputy chief of the Burundi National Defence Force (FDNB).

According to witnesses, Emile Nikobiri was arrested solely for having dared, during their conversation, to contradict Lieutenant-Colonel Melchiade Ntirampeba about the dysfunctions of the MFP, while pointing out to him that similar dysfunctions also exist within the FDNB, in particular the grumbling of soldiers about the delay in the payment of their pay and allowances.

The same sources said that Lieutenant-Colonel Melchiade Ntirampeba, feeling his self-esteem had been hurt, rushed to the Military Police camp to bring a pick-up full of soldiers to arrest Emile Nikobiri without a warrant from the public prosecutor's office, followed by his detention in a military cell.

SOS-Torture Burundi deplores the illegal and arbitrary detention of Emile Nikobiri by a military officer who has no legal authority to arrest. It is in fact legally inconceivable that, even if there is serious evidence of guilt, civilians should be detained in military dungeons or that their cases should be referred to the Military Prosecutor's Office or to the military courts for offences of which they are accused.

3. Kidnapping or enforced disappearance

- On the night of Sunday 28 January 2024, at around 10.30 pm, Georges Nimbona, alias Manyenye, in charge of mobilising young people from the CNL party in the

locality of Buringa in the commune of Gihanga of the Bubanza province (north-west Burundi), was kidnapped from the "Ku Mukaratusi" bar on the Buringa hill by six men armed with rifles, in a blue Toyota Spade car with tinted windows, who drove him *manu militari* to an unknown destination.

According to witnesses who watched the abduction helplessly, all the kidnappers were hooded. The people of Buringa are pointing the finger at the Imbonerakure (members of the CNDD-FDD youth league²) from this locality for having taken part in the abduction of Georges Nimbona, because they had spent the whole of Sunday watching him, including when he left the "Ku Mukaratusi" bar, where the abductors had laid an ambush for him.

SOS-Torture Burundi deplores the resurgence of acts of political intolerance directed against CNL party activists and is concerned that the abduction of Georges Nimbona could turn into an enforced disappearance like many cases of enforced disappearances committed in the past with the same *modus operandi*, basically involving agents of the National Intelligence Service (SNR).

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.

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



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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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