



# 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. 427 PUBLISHED ON 18 FEBRUARY 2024**

This report by SOS-Torture Burundi covers the period from 10 to 17 February 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.

The report also deplores the case of a CNL (National Congress for Freedom) party activist who was arbitrarily arrested by SNR (National Intelligence Service) agents in Bubanza province.

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

- According to information received by SOS-Torture Burundi, Frédéric Nzikobanyanka and his wife Geneste Nabarondo were murdered by a grenade dropped by unidentified individuals in their bedroom at their home on the Nyunzwe hill in the Nyamugari zone of the Marangara commune, in Ngozi province (northern Burundi), at around 1 am on the night of Wednesday 8 February 2024.

According to local sources, the motive for the murder of Frédéric Nzikobanyanka, who was a member of the CNL party, and his wife has not yet been determined, but the residents of Nyunzwe hill believe that their murder is linked to a campaign of intimidation and harassment of CNL activists under way in several localities throughout the country.

- In the early evening of Sunday 11 February 2024, a man known as Ismaïl Nizigiymana, alias Mangarara, aged around fifty, was shot dead by a policeman not far from the main town of Rugombo commune in the province of Cibitoke (north-west Burundi).

- On the morning of Monday 12 February 2024, a young man known as Kelly, aged 20, died as a result of the blows and wounds inflicted on him by Imbonerakure at 1<sup>st</sup> avenue in the Nyamugari district of the commune and province of Gitega (central Burundi), at the instigation of a woman named Félicité, also an activist of the CNDD-FDD party (National Council for the Defence of Democracy-Forces for the Defence of Democracy).

According to witnesses to the horrific scene, on 9 February 2024, young Kelly, a distributor of Brarudi<sup>1</sup> products on a trolley, was sharing a glass of beer with the 55-year-old woman in a bistro on 1<sup>st</sup> avenue in the Nyamugari district, commonly known as "Kuri CEPGL<sup>2</sup>". At one point, Félicité started shouting that her money, the sum of eight hundred thousand Burundian francs, had been stolen by Kelly. Despite young Kelly's denials, Félicité immediately telephoned the local Imbonerakure to ask them to come and "do him justice". They arrived in a hurry and rushed at Kelly, violently beating and wounding him to the point where he could no longer stand up.

The same sources said that Kelly was evacuated in a very critical condition to the *Lueur d'Espoir*<sup>3</sup> health centre in Gitega for intensive care.

SOS-Torture Burundi has learned that after hearing the sad news, members of Kelly's family tried to take justice into their own hands, but Félicité took refuge at a police station in the same Nyamugari district. It is calling for a thorough and impartial investigation to ensure that all those responsible for Kelly's murder are arrested and punished in accordance with the law.

<sup>1</sup> Breweries and lemonades from Burundi.

<sup>2</sup> Economic Community of the Great Lakes Countries.

<sup>3</sup> Glimmer of Hope.

- On Monday 12 February 2024, the lifeless body of Justin Bucumi was discovered on Transversal 3 of the Gasenyi-centre hill, in the commune of Buganda of the Cibitoke province (north-west Burundi).

According to witnesses to the gruesome discovery, the victim had received several blows to the head with a pickaxe.

- On the morning of Tuesday 13 February 2024, the lifeless body of a woman known as Carine Ngendakumana, aged around forty, was found on Transversal 3 of the Nyamitanga hill, in the commune of Buganda of the Cibitoke province, around fifty metres from a military position.

According to local sources, the victim's body had been decapitated with a machete and was covered in wounds all over.

- On the night of Wednesday 14 February 2024, a CNDD-FDD activist known as Félicité Sinzohagera was beheaded by unidentified individuals who found her at her home on the Nyangurube hill in the Rugege zone, in the Butaganzwa commune of the province of Ruyigi (eastern Burundi).

According to local sources, the motive for the crime remains unclear.

SOS-Torture Burundi deploras the upsurge in targeted killings in Burundi, particularly in the communes of Buganda and Rugombo of the Cibitoke province, and calls for thorough and meticulous investigations to uncover the perpetrators of these despicable acts and bring them to justice.

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

- Information reaching SOS-Torture Burundi reveals that on Thursday 8 February 2024, a CNL party activist known as Désiré Bizimana was arbitrarily arrested by

agents of the SNR in the province of Bubanza (north-west Burundi) and Imbonerakure who found him at his workplace in a farm in Buringa in the commune of Gihanga.

According to witnesses who witnessed his arrest, Désiré Bizimana was first taken *by force* to the cell of the local police station in Gihanga before being transferred the next day by SNR agents to Bujumbura town, where he is being held in an undisclosed location.

The same sources said that Désiré Bizimana's arbitrary arrest was linked to a pseudo-investigation into the enforced disappearance of Georges Nimbona, alias Manyenye, the CNL party's youth leader in Buringa, who was abducted by SNR agents on the night of 28 January 2024 at around 10.30 p.m.

SOS-Torture Burundi condemns the upsurge in acts of harassment against CNL activists, which are indicative of a tense climate of political intolerance in a biased electoral context in which the ruling party, the CNDD-FDD, would almost like to compete alone.

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.



## SOS – Torture/Burundi

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

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.

SOS-TORTURE