

SOS-TORTURE BURUNDI REPORT NO. 435 PUBLISHED ON 14 APRIL 2024

This report by SOS-Torture Burundi covers the period from 6 to 13 April 2024 concerning cases of human rights violations in Burundi.

During this period, at least five (5) people were murdered in various parts of the country.

The report also deplores the case of one (1) person who was arbitrarily arrested and detained in a cell of the National Intelligence Service (SNR) and that of one (1) person who was abducted by police agents in Bujumbura city.

1. Violations of the right to life

- On the morning of Saturday 6 April 2024, at around 11 a.m., the lifeless body of an elderly man known as Firmin Ntimpirangeza, aged 72, was discovered in the Mutwenzi River valley, at the foot of the Rutegama hill, in the commune and province of Gitega (central Burundi).

According to witnesses, the body of the septuagenarian showed wounds to the head and arms, indicating that he had been murdered by unidentified individuals who had ambushed him the day before as he returned alone to his home on the same hill, after sharing a glass of beer with his brother in a local bar.

The same sources stated that the victim's body had been deposited in the morgue of Gitega hospital and that no investigation had been opened to identify the circumstances and the perpetrators of Firmin Ntimpirangeza's death in order to punish them in accordance with the law.

- On the morning of Monday 8 April 2024, the lifeless body of Elie Ntakarutimana, aged 47, was found in the Mutwenzi River, at the foot of the Higiro hill, in the commune and province of Gitega.

According to witnesses to the macabre discovery, the body of Elie Ntakarutimana, cited in several cases of theft from households in the locality, showed injuries indicating that he had been stabbed to death by unidentified individuals.

SOS-Torture Burundi deploras the upsurge in crime in Gitega province and calls for thorough investigations to identify the perpetrators of these crimes and bring them to justice so that they can be punished in accordance with the law.

- On the night of Tuesday 9 April 2024 at around 8.30 p.m., a widow known as Thérèse Nahimana, aged 42, was savagely murdered and decapitated with a machete by unidentified individuals who found her at her home on the Rugano hill in the Buhayira zone of the Murwi commune, in Cibitoke province (north-west Burundi).

According to local sources, the body of the naked victim, who left behind four children, was lying in a pool of blood and she had been raped before being murdered.

SOS-torture Burundi deploras the persistence of cases of targeted killings in Cibitoke province and calls on the administrative, judicial and police authorities in the province to do everything possible to put an end to this phenomenon, which has become intractable over the last few years. It calls for a credible and thorough investigation to identify the perpetrators of this heinous crime and punish them in accordance with the law.

- On the morning of Thursday 11 April 2024, two lifeless bodies of unidentified men were discovered in the Ntakangwa River, between the districts of Mutanga Sud in the commune of Mukaza and Mutanga Nord in the commune of Ntakangwa, in the city of Bujumbura (western Burundi).

According to witnesses to the grisly discovery, the two naked bodies had many wounds and were tied together by rope.

The same sources stated that the two bodies were buried in the afternoon of the same day, at around 5 p.m., in a cemetery close to the site of the macabre discovery, on the orders of the Rohero zone chief, Fulgence Sindayihebura, who was also responsible for organising and supervising the funeral.

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

- On the afternoon of Thursday 11 April 2024, Arsène Ntirubuza, aged 33, was arbitrarily arrested by agents of the SNR in his Mukike commune of the Bujumbura province (western Burundi) and was taken to a police cell in the locality of Nonoka, before being transferred the next morning to the SNR headquarters in Bujumbura city.

According to witnesses, Arsène Ntirubuza (married with two young children) was arrested on his way back from his potato fields. Last year, he had decided to repatriate from Rwanda, where he had spent around 8 years, after being persuaded by the local authorities that his safety would be guaranteed. He has since invested in growing and marketing potatoes.

SOS-Torture Burundi is calling for an end to the persecution of people who decide to return voluntarily, generally as a result of campaigns to raise refugees' awareness of the need to return to their native country.

3. Kidnapping or enforced disappearance

- On the night of Friday 6 April 2024, at around midnight, Djuma Ndayishimiye, an activist with the pro-Agathon Rwasana National Congress for Freedom (CNL), was abducted by police officers from his home in the Gitega district, 12th avenue n° 9, in the Kinama zone of the Ntahangwa commune, north of the city of Bujumbura (western Burundi).

According to witnesses to the horrific scene, police officers burst into Djuma Ndayishimiye's home after climbing over the gate and firing intimidating shots into the air at the night watchman who had tried to alert the occupants of the plot. They then broke into the victim's home after smashing the windows. The police officers violently dragged Djuma Ndayishimiye out of his bedroom, naked, and began beating him several times before tying him up and taking him away in a Toyota Hilux double-cabin van with tinted windows to an unknown destination.

According to the same sources, members of Djuma Ndayishimiye's family (originally from the Muhungu hill in the Butahana zone of in the Mabayi commune, in Cibitoke province) searched for him in various dungeons without success.

SOS-Torture Burundi is making a heartfelt appeal to the President of the Republic, Évariste Ndayishimiye, to order an end to the phenomenon of enforced disappearances perpetrated by certain state agents responsible for defence and security, instead of indulging himself in speeches denying the existence of this phenomenon.



SOS - Torture/Burundi

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