

## **SOS-TORTURE BURUNDI REPORT NO. 439 PUBLISHED ON 12 MAY 2024**

This report by SOS-Torture Burundi covers the period from 4 to 11 May 2024 concerning cases of human rights violations in Burundi.

During this period, at least thirteen (13) people were murdered in various parts of the country, six of whom died of their injuries following the throwing of grenades in Bujumbura city, the explosion of which also injured twenty (20) other people.

The report also deplores the case of nine (9) people who were abducted in Bujumbura and Muyinga province.

### **1. Violations of the right to life and physical integrity**

- SOS-Torture Burundi has received information revealing that on the night of Wednesday 1 May 2024, police agents from a position on Busaga hill in the commune of Burambi of the Rumonge province (south-west Burundi), arbitrarily arrested a man known as Emmanuel Ciza as he was returning to his home on Busaga hill. According to local sources, the policemen took him straight to their position and began beating him throughout the night.

The same sources said that two policemen evacuated Emmanuel Ciza, who was in a critical condition, to Murago municipal hospital the following day, but unfortunately he passed away just after arriving in the emergency department.

SOS-Torture Burundi has learned that the two police agents were arrested on 4 May 2024 on the orders of the provincial police chief in Rumonge, and that they have been held since that day in custody at the provincial police station as part of an investigation.

It is calling for a credible and impartial investigation to identify those responsible for the murder of Emmanuel Ciza and punish them in accordance with the law.

- The week under review was particularly marked by two bloody grenade attacks in different parts of the economic capital Bujumbura (western Burundi).

According to local sources, the first grenade attack took place on the night of Sunday 5 May 2024, at around 8 p.m., and targeted a bar called "Chez Adja" owned by a female officer of the Burundi National Police (PNB) known as Kiramvu, located on 6<sup>th</sup> avenue in the Kamenge district of the Ntahangwa commune. During the attack, eight (8) people were seriously injured and evacuated to Kamenge military hospital for intensive care.

The same sources said that three (3) young people among the victims subsequently succumbed to their injuries.

Witnesses to the gruesome scene revealed that the criminals fled immediately after their crime in the direction of the "Gare du Nord" in a double-cabin vehicle that was waiting for them very close to the scene of the crime.

The second attack took place in the centre of Bujumbura, in the car park at the old central market. On the evening of Friday 10 May 2024, at around 7.30 p.m., two grenades were thrown into the car park of the public transport buses serving the Gasenyi district in the north of Bujumbura. According to witnesses on the spot, three (3) of the many people queuing to wait for the buses died immediately, while fourteen (14) others were seriously injured and all were taken to hospital.

Police sources have also confirmed that another grenade exploded in the Ngagara area of the commune of Ntahangwa, not far from the camp of the Institutional Protection Support Group (GAPI). The perpetrator of the explosion, who was injured

by shrapnel from the grenade, was arrested on the spot and taken to the National Intelligence Service (SNR) detention centre.

SOS-Torture Burundi strongly condemns these grenade attacks on peaceful citizens and calls for a credible, independent and impartial investigation to identify the perpetrators of these despicable acts with a view to bringing them to justice.

- On 7 May 2024, the lifeless body of a young girl aged 12 was discovered on the Gacu hill in the commune of Nyamurenza of the Ngozi province (northern Burundi).

According to witnesses to the gruesome discovery, the victim's body was decapitated and gave the impression of having been raped before being cowardly murdered.

Local sources said that the young girl was attending Nyamurenza primary school and had just been absent from class for about a week.

SOS-Torture Burundi is calling for a thorough investigation to identify the perpetrators of the girl's murder and for them to be punished in accordance with the law.

- In the space of just two days, three lifeless bodies of unidentified men were discovered on the Muhafu hill in the Muzye district, in the commune of Giharo of the Rutana province (south-east Burundi).

According to local sources, the first body was seen on the morning of 7 May by passers-by near a mini-oil mill on the Muzye-Giharo road. They said that the victim had head injuries, signs of torture prior to his death. Local sources believe that the man was killed elsewhere and that his body was dumped there to conceal the crime. The victim's body was evacuated to Gihofi hospital on the orders of the administrative and police authorities.

The second body of an unidentified man was found the following morning by residents of Muhafu, near the Muyovozi River on the border with Tanzania. The local administration ordered the burial of the victim on the afternoon of Wednesday 8 May, at which time another body was spotted floating in the waters of the Muyovozi River. However, according to the same sources, local administrative officials objected to the body being fished out, on the pretext that there was a lack of disinfectants.

Residents of Muhafu hill believe that the three men found murdered were CNL (National Congress for Freedom) party activists who had been caught by local administrators and Imbonerakure when they tried to take refuge in Tanzania to escape the persecution to which they were being subjected, particularly following the ousting of MP Agathon Rwasa as party leader.

- On Thursday 9 May 2024, a young Imbonerakure known as Jean Nsengiyumva was stabbed to death by three of his peers on the Kamenge sub-hill in the Rugajo hill and district, in the commune of Mugina of the Cibitoke province (north-west Burundi).

According to local sources, these Imbonerakure had together stolen a large sum of money from one of the households, not far from the commune's main town, but the deceased had decided to confiscate all the loot on his own, and this angered his co-perpetrators. They decided to eliminate him as punishment for his dishonesty and audacity.

The same sources said that the residents of Rugajo hill are complaining of an upsurge in cases of theft from certain households and crop fields, mainly attributable to young Imbonerakure from the ruling party, the National Council for the Defense of Démocratie-Forces for the Defense of Democracy (CNDD-FDD). They are calling on the administrative and police authorities to act appropriately to put an end to this phenomenon, which is disturbing the peace of the population.

- On the afternoon of Friday 10 May 2024, at around 2 p.m., a young man known as Philippe Nsabimana, aged 22, was killed by two Imbonerakure<sup>1</sup> including a certain Victor Niyukuri on the Kanyaru River at the foot of the Ryamukona hill, in the commune of Kabarore of the Kayanza province (northern Burundi).

According to witnesses, Philippe Nsabimana wanted to go to the small market in Iviro, located on Rwandan territory. Unfortunately, two Imbonerakure who were making the rounds in the locality caught him. They beat him severely before thrusting a spear through one of his ears and he died on the spot. The two Imbonerakure finally threw the victim's body into the Kanyaru River with the intention of concealing the crime they had just committed.

According to the same sources, a person who was not far from the scene of the crime immediately raised the alarm in the locality and the population rushed to apprehend the two criminals, who would have been lynched had it not been for the rapid intervention of the police.

SOS-Torture Burundi has learned that the police have arrested the two Imbonerakure and that the body of the victim has been retrieved and evacuated to the Ryamukona health centre. It is calling on the courts to open a criminal case against these criminals immediately, with a view to punishing them in accordance with the law.

## 2. Cases of abduction or enforced disappearance

- On 5 May 2024, a young man known as Blaise Irakoze was arbitrarily arrested by agents of the National Intelligence Service (SNR) at the Kobero border in the commune of Giteranyi of the Muyinga province (north-east Burundi), just after entering his homeland from Uganda, where he had been working for some time. Sources in Uganda confirmed that Blaise Irakoze had been living in Nakasongera

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<sup>1</sup> Members of the Youth League affiliated to the CNDD-FDD party.

before deciding to return to his native country. However, his travel document expired, forcing him to go to the Burundian embassy in Kampala to apply for a document called "GO Home", where he was subjected to intensive questioning before obtaining it.

According to sources in his family, Blaise Irakoze had taken a bus of Friends Agency to Bujumbura the previous evening, but was intercepted at the Kobero border, where Intelligence agents were waiting with his photo. They immediately took him to an unknown destination, but local sources believe that Blaise Irakoze is currently being held by the Intelligence services in Muyinga province.

SOS-Torture Burundi deplors the fact that Burundians who return to their country are regularly persecuted, and the fact that arrests are made in the form of kidnappings, without ever informing the victims' families.

It is asking the Intelligence services to reveal Blaise Irakoze's fate and whereabouts, as well as any reasons for his arrest.

- Since the afternoon of Monday 6 May 2024, seven employees of the Eden Garden Resort hotel-bar-restaurant in the locality of Kajaga, in the commune of Mutimbuzi in the province of Bujumbura (western Burundi), have been missing since they were arrested while on duty by police officers from the Institutional Protection Support Group (GAPI).

According to witnesses, the first five employees - Joseph, Fiston Baruwa, Stacy Brenda Kaneza, Gloria Mugwaneza and Liliane Kadende - were arrested on the same day. Police officers burst into the hotel with the list of people to be arrested and then took them away to an unknown destination.

According to the same sources, the police returned the following afternoon and arrested the other two, Clovis Niyukuri and Elvis Nininahazwe, in complicity with the

manager of the hotel bar-restaurant known as François Uwiragiye, nicknamed Mayondori.

The same sources said that since their arrest, the families of these people have been worried about the safety of their loved ones, and that they have tried to search for them in various police dungeons, but without success.

- On Wednesday 8 May 2024, a man known as Guy Armand Kawen Ndikumana, aged 43, was abducted on his way out of the Judicial Police Headquarters in the Jabe district of the Mukaza commune, in Bujumbura city (western Burundi).

According to witnesses, Guy Armand Kawen Ndikumana was abducted just outside the police station by unidentified men who took him away in a white Toyota Probox vehicle to an unknown destination. A woman who was with him tried to call for help, but the kidnappers snatched her phone to prevent her from taking photos of the vehicle carrying the victim.

Sources in his family said that since that day, there has been no news of Guy Armand Kawen Ndikumana, who lived in the Kijiji district of the Kanyosha zone, in the commune of Muha.

SOS-Torture Burundi deplores the upsurge in cases of arrests carried out in the form of abductions, which are becoming a custom within the defence and security forces, in violation of the relevant rules of the code of criminal procedure on deprivation of liberty.

It is calling on the police to reveal the fate of these missing persons and to put an end to these illegal practices, which only serve to tarnish the country's image, which has already been damaged by a series of serious human rights violations, particularly since the CNDD-FDD party came to power.



## 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 set up to inform 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 provide information on the realities of the country followed the carnage of around a hundred people killed on 11 December and 12 December 2015 by police and soldiers on the pretext of pursuing rebels who had just attacked military camps on the outskirts of the capital.

The areas affected are said to be those contesting President Nkurunziza's third term in office, namely Musaga, Mutakura, Cibitoke, Nyakabiga and Jabe, the last two being located in the centre of Bujumbura town hall.