



SOS-TORTURE BURUNDI REPORT NO. 442 PUBLISHED ON 2 JUNE 2024

This report by SOS-Torture Burundi covers the period from 25 May to 1 June 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) teacher who was arbitrarily arrested and detained in Bururi province and that of two (2) members of the same family who were abducted in Bujumbura province.

1. Violations of the right to life

- On the night of Friday 25 May 2024, at around 11 p.m., a young man known as Jonathan Ndiokubwayo, alias Famba, aged 24, was shot dead at close range by police Chief Corporal Alexandre Rwaso as he tried to remove a chain from his neck at 15 Avenue in the Mirango district of the Kamenge zone, in the Ntakangwa urban district of the Bujumbura city (western Burundi).

According to witnesses to the horrific scene, Jonathan Ndiokubwayo (pictured below) was shot in the forehead and died instantly.



Jonathan Ndiwokubwayo (originally from the hill of Rutegama in the commune of Isare, in the province of Bujumbura, and living in Muyinga where he worked as a works manager) was returning from a dowry ceremony for his school friend when he and his friends came across a group of thieves. The policeman, Alexandre Rwaswa, who was part of the group, tried to snatch the chain from Jonathan's neck. As Jonathan tried to defend himself, his assailant drew his pistol and shot him in the forehead. He then chased after the victim's friends and shot at them, fortunately without hitting them. This is how policemen intervened, arrested the criminal and took him to the Kamenge police station for an investigation.

SOS-Torture Burundi has learned that Police Chief Corporal Alexandre Rwaswa (see photo below) was found guilty of the murder of Jonathan Ndiwokubwayo and sentenced on 31 May 2024 by the Ntahangwa High Court to life imprisonment and ordered to pay thirty million Burundi francs (30,000,000 BuF) in damages to the victim's family.



- On the morning of Sunday 26 May 2024, the lifeless body of a 13-year-old child known as Ismaël Nyabenda was discovered by Christians on their way to Sunday mass on the Kinyami hill in the zone, commune and province of Ngozi (northern Burundi).

According to witnesses to the macabre discovery, the victim's body was hung from a tree by a rope, with wounds to the head and neck. This is sufficient evidence that Ismaël Nyabenda was killed elsewhere by as yet unidentified individuals and that his body was hanged there to simulate suicide and thus curb any subsequent investigation.

- On Sunday 26 May 2024, the lifeless body of a young man known as Eric Nduwimana, aged 24, was discovered on the Nyamabuye hill in the commune of Gitanga, in Rutana province (south-east Burundi).

According to witnesses to the gruesome discovery, the body of Eric Nduwimana was found hanging from a tree with the help of a rope. He was identified as a native of the hill of Kabizi, in the commune of Kayogoro of the Makamba province, thanks to his national identity card found on him, as well as his voter's card and a sum of twenty-seven thousand Burundian francs (27,000 Fbu).

The same people believe that Eric Nduwimana was killed elsewhere and that his body was hanged there to simulate suicide, because of the visible lesions on his head and neck, but without a single drop of blood found at the scene.

SOS-Torture Burundi is calling for a thorough and credible investigation to determine the circumstances and the perpetrators of this young man's murder, with a view to punishing them in accordance with the law.

- On Sunday 26 May 2024, two lifeless bodies of unidentified men were found floating on the waters of Lake Tanganyika, at the foot of the Rimbo hill in the commune of Nyanza-Lac in the Makamba province (southern Burundi).

According to witnesses to the macabre discovery, the local administration, in collusion with the local police, ordered the immediate burial of the bodies without waiting for an investigation to identify the victims and perpetrators of the double crime.

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

- On the morning of Thursday 30 May 2024, Germain Ntakarutimana, headmaster of the Murehe communal high school in Bururi province (southern Burundi), was arrested by the police on the orders of the provincial director of education (DPE) during a meeting he held with school officials in the province at the Bururi high school.

According to witnesses, Germain Ntakarutimana was arrested after a call sign from the Humura broadcasts of the African Public Radio (RPA) rang on his mobile phone. The provincial director of education, Antoine Sabushimike, immediately suspected him of providing information to RPA (a medium perceived by the Burundian authorities as belonging to the radical opposition) and quickly called in the police to arrest him forthwith.

According to the same sources, Germain Ntakarutimana was taken to a cell at the Bururi provincial police station, where he spent the night before being released at around 11 a.m. the following day.

3. Cases of abduction or enforced disappearance

- ¹ On the morning of Tuesday 28 May 2024, a CNL ("National Congress for Freedom") party activist known as Claudine Nshimirimana and her husband were successively abducted by Imbonerakure and policemen on the Gikangaga hill in the Ruyaga zone of the Kanyosha commune in the province of Bujumbura (western Burundi).

According to local sources, a number of Imbonerakure accompanied by members of the Ruyaga police burst into the home of Claudine Nshimirimana (see photo below), sister of Aimé Magera, spokesperson for the CNL party in Europe, at around 5 a.m.

¹ Members of the Youth League affiliated to the CNDD-FDD party (Conseil National pour la Défense de la Démocratie-Forces pour la Défense de la Démocratie).



After ordering the family to open the door to them, they searched every nook and cranny of the house for any alleged rebel sheltering there, but found nothing incriminating.

According to the same sources, just as the policemen wanted to leave, claiming that everything was in order, the Imbonerakure decided to take the mother of six children away for a confrontation with the person who had alerted them. Claudine Nshimirimana was then taken to the home of the head of the hill in Gikangaga, where she was briefly detained before her relatives lost track of her.

The next morning, Claudine Nshimirimana's husband was also abducted and taken to an unknown destination, after answering a phone call from an Imbonerakure who said he had a summons for him. As a result, their minor children spent their first night at home alone.

SOS-Torture Burundi later learned that Ms Claudine Nshimirimana was finally released on the afternoon of Thursday 30 May 2024 after three days in detention at the Kabezi prosecutor's office. Her husband had released the day before.

SOS-Torture Burundi deploras the upsurge in political persecution of opposition party activists, which, in this case, is being coupled with child trauma. It calls on the President of the Republic, Evariste Ndayishimiye, to keep a constant watch on the political climate, especially at this crucial time of the forthcoming elections. Indeed, there is no need to demonstrate too much that the electoral process in Burundi is always accompanied by a certain degree of violence, particularly since the CNDD-FDD party came to power.

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 city.