



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. 449 PUBLISHED 21 JULY 2024

This report by SOS-Torture Burundi covers the period from 13 to 20 July 2024 concerning cases of human rights violations in Burundi.

During this period, at least six (6) people were murdered in the provinces of Cibitoke and Gitega.

The report also deplores the cases of three (3) people who were arbitrarily arrested in the provinces of Makamba and Ruyigi.

1. Violations of the right to life

- On the morning of Tuesday 15 July 2024, at around 10 a.m., Matthieu Harerimana, a resident of the Bwoga district in the commune and province of Gitega (central Burundi), was found dying, with a head wound, by unidentified individuals in a marsh separating the districts of Mushasha and Shatanya.

According to local sources, these individuals evacuated the victim to the regional hospital in Gitega, but then disappeared into thin air with his two mobile phones.

The same sources said that Matthieu Harerimana, who was preparing for his wedding, which would have taken place on 27 July 2024, was quickly transferred to Tanganyika care hospital, where he sadly passed away a few hours later.

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

- According to information received by SOS-Torture Burundi, five bodies of unidentified people, including 3 men and 2 women, were discovered in less than a

week on the hills of Ndava and Ruhagarika in the commune of Buganda, in Cibitoke province (north-west Burundi).

According to the source, the last body of a decomposing man was found tied up on the Ruhagarika hill, some 800 metres from the Rusizi river separating Burundi from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Two other bodies of decomposing women were found on Friday 12 July on transversal road 3 in the Ndava zone, close to the Kagunuzi river, while the first two bodies of men were discovered the day before on transversal road 7 in the Buganda zone and commune. Residents close to the scene of these gruesome discoveries believed that all these people had been killed elsewhere and that their bodies had been dumped in these different places to confuse any investigations. They pointed to a vehicle with tinted windows that had been seen on the night of Thursday 11 July 2024 as the one that had dumped the bodies.

¹The same source stated that all five bodies were hastily buried by Imbonerakure on the orders of the Buganda communal administrator, Pamphile Hakizimana, without any investigation to identify the victims and perpetrators of these heinous crimes.

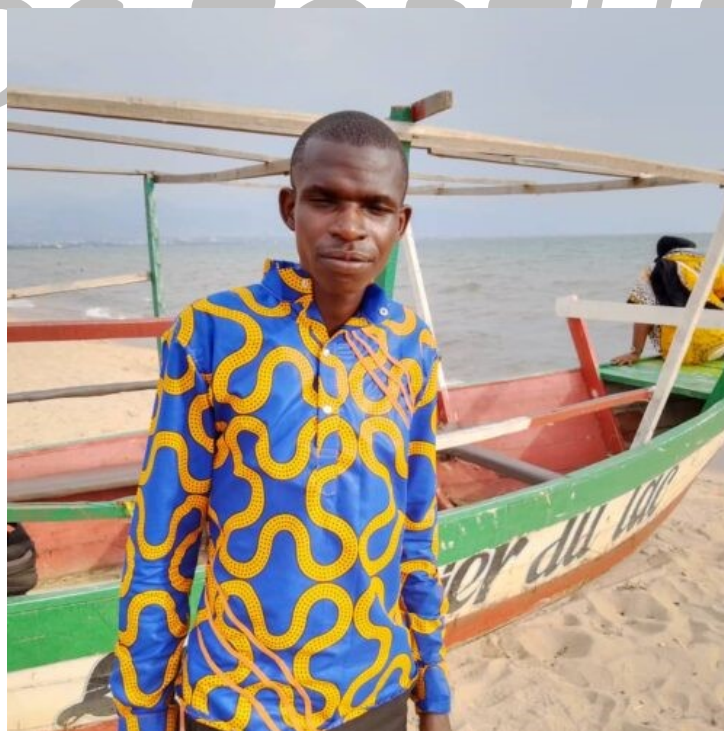
SOS-Torture Burundi deplures the persistence of the phenomenon of bodies killed and abandoned in the wild in the province of Cibitoke, more particularly in the communes of Buganda and Rugombo. It reiterates its constant appeal to the administrative, police and judicial authorities to take effective and appropriate measures to identify the perpetrators of these crimes in order to put an end to this criminal phenomenon, which has become intractable over the last few years.

2. Violations of the right to freedom of movement: arbitrary arrests and detentions

¹ *Members of the youth league affiliated to the CNDD-FDD party (" National Council for the Defence of Democracy-Forces for the Defence of Democracy ")*.

- On Saturday 13 July 2024, Pantaléon Ntakarutimana, correspondent for Jimbere magazine and Indundi Culture radio in the province of Ruyigi (eastern Burundi), was arbitrarily arrested by the police on the orders of Diane Nibitanga, the local administrator of Bweru, and was ruthlessly taken to the dungeon of the police station in the same commune.

According to witnesses, journalist Pantaléon Ntakarutimana (see photo below) was accused by the commune administrator of disseminating false and unbalanced information. At the time of his arrest, he was accused in particular of having broadcast information, without the version of the local administrator of Bweru, on a case of a lifeless body of a person who was said to have died in a road accident. This created a controversy between the administration and members of the victim's family, who refused to bury him without an investigation into the cause and circumstances of his death.



SOS-Torture Burundi has learned that journalist Pantaléon Ntakarutimana was released on Monday 15 July 2024 after spending two days in police custody in the Bweru commune jail.

SOS-Torture Burundi deplores the resurgence of cases of arbitrary arrests of certain journalists in certain provinces of Burundi, which are interpreted as acts of intimidation and harassment aimed at muzzling the press, especially on the eve of the 2025 electoral process.

- On the morning of Monday 15 July 2024, at around 11 a.m., a man known as Grégoire Ndayegamiye and his wife Spès Kwizera were arbitrarily arrested and detained in a dungeon in the commune and province of Makamba (southern Burundi), after responding to a summons from the Makamba prosecutor in connection with a dispute over the paternity of a child of their daughter, Anny Stecy Gakiza.

According to witnesses, the dispute originated in 2019 when the daughter of Grégoire Ndayegamiye and Spès Kwizera became pregnant at the age of 14. Although the girl claimed that the person responsible for her pregnancy was a young man from her school, the son of a certain Odette Inakarire, the young man denied any relationship with the girl. At the time of the birth, the girl's parents decided to register Anny Stecy Gakiza in their name, so that their daughter could continue her studies. However, when the child reached the age of three, the biological father's family began to take an interest in the child and allegedly even filed a paternity suit, without the knowledge of Grégoire Ndayegamiye and Spès Kwizera.

SOS-Torture Burundi has learned that Grégoire Ndayegamiye and his wife Spès Kwizera were released the following day after spending the night in detention in the main town of the commune of Makamba.

It deplores the failure to comply with the rules of the Code of Criminal Procedure relating to police custody, which are normally applicable only in the context of a criminal investigation.



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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.

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