



## 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. 454 PUBLISHED ON 25 AUGUST 2024**

This report by SOS-Torture Burundi covers the period from 17 to 24 August 2024 concerning cases of human rights violations in Burundi.

During this period, at least two (2) people were murdered in the provinces of Makamba and Ngozi.

The report also deplores the cases of four (4) people who were arbitrarily arrested and detained in the provinces of Bubanza and Ngozi and in Bujumbura town, as well as those of two (2) people who were abducted in the province of Rumonge and in Bujumbura town.

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

- On the night of Monday 19 August 2024, an alleged thief known as Audace Ngendahayo, aged 52, was murdered and then decapitated by Imbonerakure<sup>1</sup> on the Rugajo hill in the commune of Mugina of the Cibitoke province (north-west Burundi).

According to local sources, Imbonerakure found the father of seven in a banana plantation in the locality and immediately struck him several times with a machete before cutting off his head.

The same sources said that the deceased was buried on the spot by Imbonerakure on the orders of the local administrator of Mugina, Julienne Ndayihaya, without the participation of members of the victim's family.

---

<sup>1</sup> Members of the youth league affiliated to the ruling CNDD-FDD party (Conseil National National Council for the Defence of Democracy-Forces for the Defence of Democracy)

SOS-Torture Burundi deploras the barbaric behaviour of certain Imbonerakure who believe they can do whatever they like because they enjoy almost total impunity for all the crimes they regularly commit. It calls on the local police and judicial authorities to open a credible investigation to identify all the perpetrators of the crime and punish them in accordance with the law.

- In the early hours of Tuesday 20 August 2024, the lifeless body of a young man known as Cédric Nkeshimana, aged 23, was discovered by passers-by, hanging from a mango tree in the Makamba II district in the capital of this southern province of Burundi.

According to local sources, Cédric Nkeshimana had just completed his studies at a nursing school and was working in a pharmacy in the provincial capital. Witnesses to the macabre discovery said that the body of the deceased showed no wounds and believed that Cédric Nkeshimana had been killed elsewhere and that his body had then been hanged there by his killers to simulate suicide and thus falsify any subsequent investigation.

SOS-Torture Burundi is calling for an investigation to be opened to clarify the circumstances surrounding the death of Cédric Nkeshimana and to identify the perpetrators of the crime so that they can be brought to justice and punished in accordance with the law.

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

- On the afternoon of Monday 19 August 2024, two young men, Eric Mayeye, aged 31, and Derrick Vyizigiro, were arbitrarily arrested on the hill of Buringa in the commune of Gihanga of the Bubanza province (north-west Burundi) by a certain Emery Badogo, an influential member of the CNDD-FDD party in this commune, in

complicity with certain policemen who were with him, and were taken away in his vehicle to an unknown destination.

According to witnesses, before their arbitrary arrest, Eric Mayeye and Derrick Vyizigiro were tied up and violently beaten by these policemen on the orders of Emery Badogo.

SOS-Torture Burundi later learned that the two young men had been taken to a cell in the commune of Gihanga, where they are being arbitrarily detained.

It condemns the arbitrary arrest and detention of Eric Mayeye and Derrick Vyizigiro, which were carried out by a person with no capacity or power to deprive them of their liberty. It calls for the immediate release of these two young people and the prosecution of Emery Badogo so that he can be punished in accordance with the law.

- On Wednesday 21 August 2024, a young man known as Ferdinand Mpawenimana, aged 32, was arbitrarily arrested in the Songa district of the Kamenge zone, in the Ntakangwa commune of Bujumbura town (western Burundi), by the head of the Imbonerakure youth league in the zone, Jimmy Ndayishimiye.

According to witnesses, Ferdinand Mpawenimana, a native of the Murayi hill in the commune of Giheta of the Gitega province, was arrested for no known reason while working as a shoemaker and was initially taken to the Kamenge zone cell, before SNR (National Intelligence Service) agents arrived to take him to an unknown destination.

SOS-Torture Burundi deplores the resurgence of cases of arbitrary arrests in the form of abductions in the deafening silence of the country's authorities, which encourages the perpetrators of these illegal practices at the heart of many other forms of serious human rights violations in Burundi. It calls on the SNR authorities

to reveal the fate and whereabouts of Ferdinand Mpawenimana, who is also an activist with the CNL (National Congress for Freedom) party, the wing of MP Agathon Rwasa, and to release him without delay.

- On the morning of Thursday 22 August 2024, a man known as Jean Ndorukwigira, aged 69, was arrested by policemen at his home on the Rubari hill in the commune of Busiga of the Ngozi province (northern Burundi) and taken to the commune's cell in the locality of Mihigo.

According to local sources, Jean Ndorukwigira, who worked in the same commune of Busiga before his recent retirement, was arrested on a warrant issued by the public prosecutor at the Ngozi High Court, Alfred Franck Ngomanziza, in a civil case relating to a debt of one million two hundred thousand Burundi francs (1.200,000 BuF) that his son, Celeus Ndiokubwayo (aged 38), had not been able to repay, in addition to the monthly interest generated at the rate of two hundred thousand Burundi francs (200,000 BIF) per month. The same sources revealed that Celeus Ndiokubwayo found it impossible to repay the debt he had incurred, and preferred to flee his native country. His father was arbitrarily arrested and detained to force him to repay the debt on behalf of his son!

SOS-Torture Burundi deplures the arbitrary deprivation of liberty of Jean Ndorukwigira by a public prosecutor who should be a bulwark of respect for the rights and freedoms of citizens in his constituency. It calls for an end to the arbitrary detention and the immediate and unconditional release of the victim, who is being held in defiance of the law.

### 3. Cases of abduction or enforced disappearance

- On the afternoon of Monday 19 August 2024, at around 6 p.m., a young man known as Wivin Mpundu (see photo below), aged 26, was abducted from the capital of the commune and province of Rumonge (south-west Burundi) by two police agents who took him on board their motorbike to an unknown destination.



According to family sources, Wivin Mpundu fled Burundi to Rwanda in 2015, but has been repatriated since 2023.

SOS-Torture Burundi later learned that the young man, Wivin Mpundu, had been released by the police and was currently with his family.

- On the night of Friday 23 August 2024, at around 10 p.m., a man known as Léonidas Bitama (see photo below), aged 50 and from the Ruzibazi hill in the commune of Mukike of the Bujumbura province (western Burundi), was abducted from the Officers' Mess, Bujumbura garrison, by unidentified men who took him against his will to a place commonly known as Chanic, in the same city of Bujumbura.



SOS-Torture Burundi has learned that Léonidas Bitama reappeared the following afternoon and was able to return to his family.



## SOS – Torture/Burundi

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

It deplors the blatant violation of the relevant rules of the Code of Criminal Procedure, which stipulate in particular that *"any judicial police officer or the magistrate under whose control he is acting has the obligation to inform the family of the person in custody or any other interested person of the measure taken against him and of the place of custody"* (article 36, para. 1).

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.