

SOS-TORTURE BURUNDI REPORT NO. 459 PUBLISHED ON 29 SEPTEMBER 2024

This report by SOS-Torture Burundi covers the period from 21 to 28 September 2024 concerning cases of human rights violations in Burundi.

During this period, at least two (2) people were murdered in the province of Cibitoke.

The report also deplores the case of four (4) people who were arbitrarily arrested and detained in the provinces of Bubanza and Rumonge and in Bujumbura town.

1. Violations of the right to life

- On the afternoon of Tuesday 24 September 2024, at around 5 p.m., two lifeless bodies of young men in their thirties were discovered by farmers on transversal roads 11 and 12 of the Rusiga hill, in the commune of Rugombo of the Cibitoke province (north-west Burundi), some 500 metres from the Rusizi river separating Burundi from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

According to witnesses to the macabre discovery, the bodies of these young men had been decapitated and were lying in a pool of still-fresh blood.

According to eyewitnesses, the bodies of the young men were dumped there by agents of the National Intelligence Service (SNR), who claimed to have seen the vehicle of the head of the SNR in Cibitoke province, police colonel Félix Havyarimana, circulating in the area on the night of 23 to 24 September 2024, and suspected him of involvement in the double murder. The two bodies were buried towards nightfall on the same day, on the orders of the administrator of the Rugombo commune.

SOS-Torture Burundi deplores the persistent phenomenon of bodies being abandoned and found in the wild, particularly in the communes of Rugombo and

Buganda in the province of Cibitoke. It calls on the Burundian authorities, in this case the President of the Republic, Evariste Ndayishimiye, to take appropriate measures to put an end to this criminal phenomenon, which has become intractable since the advent of the CNDD-FDD (National Council for the Defence of Democracy- Forces for the Defence of Democracy) regime.

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

- SOS-Torture Burundi has received information that Léonce Sinzinkayo, former Minister of Transport and Telecommunications (1996) and Mayor of Bujumbura (1993-1994), was abducted on the night of Thursday 29 August 2024 from his home in the Mutanga Nord district of Bujumbura town hall (western Burundi) by SNR agents, who took him to an unknown destination.

According to sources in his family, Léonce Sinzinkayo, aged 70, has been held since the day of his arrest in the dungeon of the SNR headquarters located close to the Regina Mundi cathedral in the Rohero district of the Mukaza commune. The members of his family also deplore the fact that he has not been granted any visiting rights for a month of arbitrary detention.

SOS-Torture Burundi calls on the General Administration to reveal the fate of Léonce Sinzinkayo and to put an end to his arbitrary detention, which is taking place in blatant violation of Article 34 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, which stipulates that "*judicial police custody [...] may not exceed seven clear days, unless the officer of the Public Prosecutor's Office decides on an essential extension, the maximum limit of which is double that period*".

- On 24 September 2024, two traders in BRARUDI products (Brasseries et Limonaderies du Burundi) known as Alphonse Manirambona and Denis Iradukunda, originally from the Gatete zone in the commune and province of Rumonge (south-west Burundi), were arrested after being accused of moving these products from the Rumonge zone to the Gatete zone.

According to witnesses, these two traders from Rumonge were arrested by police agents in collaboration with the head of BRARUDI in Rumonge, Ciella Cardine Kanezero, who ambushed them on the Murembwe river separating the Rumonge and Gatete zones, and were taken to the Rumonge dungeon on trumped-up charges that "it is forbidden to move BRARUDI products from one zone to another".

SOS-Torture Burundi deploras the arbitrary arrest and detention of these two traders, as it is inconceivable to prevent the free movement of goods and people in a given area and their detention violates with impunity the constitutional right to freedom of movement (Article 33 of the Constitution).

- On Thursday 26 September 2024, a man known as Juvénal Ntahomvukiye was arbitrarily arrested by soldiers from the Mudubugu camp in the commune of Gihanga of the Bubanza province (north-western Burundi) and was taken *manu militari* to the camp's dungeon.

According to witnesses, Juvénal Ntahomvukiye was arrested in the disputed land properties between the Mudubugu camp and the inhabitants of this locality.

The same sources said that the 60-year-old was asked to sign a rental contract with the camp authorities in order to be released, an offer he refused, as did all the people of Mudubugu who refused to sign this type of contract.

SOS-Torture Burundi deploras the clear violation of the rules of the Code of Criminal Procedure, which in no way invests members of the Burundi National Defence Force



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with the power to deprive civilians of their liberty. It calls for the immediate and unconditional release of Juvénal Ntahomvukiye and for the criminal and administrative prosecution of those responsible for his arbitrary arrest and detention.

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.