



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. 460 PUBLISHED ON 6 OCTOBER 2024

This report by SOS-Torture Burundi covers the period from 28 September to 5 October 2024 concerning cases of human rights violations in Burundi.

During this period, at least one (1) person died at the Kamenge University Hospital (CHUK) following the refusal of the director of Bubanza prison to authorise his transfer to a care facility adapted to his illness.

The report also deplores the case of one (1) person who was abducted by the provincial head of the National Intelligence Service (SNR) in Muyinga province.

1. Violation of the right to life

- On the night of Wednesday 2 October 2024, Joseph Nzigamasabo, a 31-year-old inmate of Bubanza central prison (north-west Burundi), died in Bujumbura at the Kamenge University Hospital (CHUK), known as “Roi Khaled”, after a complication of his severe lung disease following his refusal to be transferred to a specialist health facility. According to witnesses at Bubanza prison, Joseph Nzigamasabo kept asking to be transferred to a specialist care facility because his state of health had been steadily deteriorating for over a month, but he was categorically refused by the director of Bubanza prison, Samuel Kayanda, for the simple reason that he had taken part in demonstrations in 2015 against the illegal and illegitimate third term of office of the late president Pierre Nkurunziza. Samuel Kayanda did not even deign to listen to the repeated warnings from the nursing staff at Bubanza prison about the gradual deterioration in the health of detainee Joseph Nzigamasabo.

The same sources stated that on 12 September 2024, a nurse decided to put Joseph Nzigamasabo on the list of detainees requiring transfer to Bubanza hospital, less than two kilometres from the prison, but the prison director ordered that Joseph Nzigamasabo be taken there in handcuffs. After 12 days in hospital in handcuffs,

Joseph Nzigamasabo was diagnosed with serious lung lesions requiring urgent evacuation to a specialist care facility in Bujumbura, and they decided to transfer him to the CHUK on 24 September. However, this evacuation was not carried out immediately because the director of Bubanza prison, Joseph Kayanda, opposed his transfer, arguing that he should return to prison. As the doctors at Bubanza hospital insisted that the patient be transferred urgently to a specialist facility, Joseph Nzigamasabo was finally transferred to the CHUK on 27 September 2024, where he died 5 days later.

SOS-Torture Burundi deplures the repeated but unpunished violations of legal provisions relating to the detention of persons deprived of their liberty, particularly with regard to the right to health of detainees, and calls on the competent authority in the Ministry of Justice to take legal action against the director of Bubanza prison, Samuel Kayanda, in order to discourage the perpetrators of these serious violations, which tarnish the already tarnished image of the Burundian justice system.

It recommends that the judicial and prison authorities ensure that all persons deprived of their liberty can exercise and enjoy their rights, including the right to health, in a fair manner.

2. Kidnapping or enforced disappearance

- Information reaching SOS-Torture Burundi has revealed that on the night of Friday 20 September 2024, at around 7.30 p.m., a man known as Karangwa, aged 56, was abducted from his home on the Kijumbura hill in the Masaka zone, in the commune of Giteranyi of the Muyinga province (north-east Burundi), by the head of the National Intelligence Service (SNR) in the province, Wilson Nzisabira, in collaboration with young Imbonerakure affiliated to the ruling party, the National Council for the Defence of Democracy-Forces for the Defence of Democracy (CNDD-FDD).

According to witnesses, Karangwa, a former refugee from the Mahama camp in the Republic of Rwanda who had repatriated at the beginning of 2022, was abducted by Imbonerakure just as soon as he arrived at his home, who quickly handed him over to the provincial head of the SNR in Muyinga. Karangwa was then taken aboard Wilson Nzisabira's vehicle with tinted windows to an unknown destination.

The same sources stated that, since that day, members of Karangwa's family have searched for him in all the official dungeons in Muyinga, without success. The Imbonerakure and certain local authorities had always harboured unfounded suspicions that the victim had maintained close links with Burundians who had remained in Rwanda.

SOS-Torture Burundi deplores the impunity surrounding all the human rights violations committed by Wilson Nzisabira since the beginning of his career, particularly during the dark period when he was head of the OPJ unit at the SNR.

It calls on the SNR authorities to reveal Karangwa's fate and to take appropriate measures to bring Wilson Nzisabira to justice so that he can be punished in accordance with the law.



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 of office, namely Musaga, Mutakura, Cibitoke, Nyakabiga and Jabe, the last two being located in the centre of Bujumbura town.