



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. 461 PUBLISHED ON 13 OCTOBER 2024

This report by SOS-Torture Burundi covers the period from 5 to 12 October 2024 concerning cases of human rights violations in Burundi.

During this period, at least four (4) people were murdered in the provinces of Cibitoke and Ruyigi.

The report also deplores the case of one (1) detainee deprived of his right to health in Bujumbura central prison, as well as that of one (1) priest who was abducted by agents of the National Intelligence Service (SNR) in the city of Bujumbura.

1. Infringement of the right to life

- According to information received by SOS-Torture Burundi, on Thursday 3 October 2024, Jonathan Niyukuri, a 34-year-old inmate of Ruyigi central prison in eastern Burundi, died in the prison following the refusal of the prison governor, Éric Emerusabe, to give him permission to go and receive treatment in an appropriate care facility.

According to witnesses at Ruyigi prison, Jonathan Niyukuri has been ill since 27 September 2024 with symptoms of acute fever linked to pneumonia. Since then, he has urgently requested to be transferred to a specialist care facility due to his steadily deteriorating state of health, a request supported by nurses at Ruyigi prison who asked for his urgent transfer to the provincial hospital.

The same sources stated that the body of Jonathan Niyukuri, former manager of the Biyorwa health center in the commune of Butaganzwa and at the same time a member of the Imbonerakure youth league affiliated to the ruling CNDD-FDD party¹,

¹ National Council for the Defence of Democracy-Forces for the Defence of Democracy.

was immediately evacuated to the morgue at Ruyigi hospital and that CNDD-FDD officials in the province had forbidden prison staff from spreading this sad news.

SOS-Torture Burundi deplores the repeated but unpunished violations of the legal provisions governing the detention of persons deprived of their liberty, particularly concerning the detainees' right to health, and

It is calling on the competent authority in the Ministry of Justice to take legal action against the director of Ruyigi prison, Éric Emerusabe, in order to discourage the criminal phenomenon that has become a veritable scourge, which consists of depriving people deprived of their liberty of health care.

- In the space of just three days, three young men whose names have yet to be identified were murdered by agents of the National Intelligence Service (SNR) led by the head of this service in the province of Cibitoke (north-west Burundi), police colonel Félix Havyarimana, after several days of intense torture in solitary confinement.

According to eyewitnesses, the first young man succumbed to hammer blows to the head on the night of 6 to 7 October 2024, while two other young men were murdered in the same circumstances on the evening of Wednesday 9 October, at around 6 pm.

According to the same sources, the first body was transported during the same night to an unknown location, while the other two bodies, wrapped in a tent, were evacuated by the vehicle of the provincial head of the SNR in Cibitoke on Wednesday night to the locality of Nyamitanga, in the Buganda commune of the same province, close to the Rusizi river, where they were hastily buried. The SNR official's vehicle in Cibitoke was escorted by two police officers and three Imbonerakure, including one Liethman Mugirire, from Buganda centre, and one Ndikumana alias Ndakugarika, from colline Gasenyi, transversale 4.

The three young men murdered had been arrested in Uvira in the province of Sud-Kivu (eastern Congo) before being brought back to Bujumbura and were suspected of belonging to the rebel group RED -TABARA.²

SOS-Torture Burundi deplores the extra-judicial executions committed with impunity by SNR officers, in particular police colonel Félix Havyarimana, who has always caused havoc wherever he has been posted as provincial intelligence chief.

2. Infringement of the right to health

- According to information received by SOS-Torture Burundi, the 68-year-old prisoner known as Léonidas Nyandwi, alias "Kiguru", is between life and death in Bujumbura Central Prison (western Burundi), commonly known as Mpimba Prison, following the violation of his right to health by prison and health authorities at Kamenge University Hospital (CHUK), commonly known as Roi Khaled.

According to sources at Mpimba prison, Léonidas Nyandwi was being held in Gitega prison after being accused of theft from a COOPEC (Coopérative d'épargne et de crédit) branch in Gitega province (central Burundi). After intense acts of torture inflicted on him by the provincial commissioner of the judicial police in Gitega with the aim of extracting a confession from him, he has been held in Gitega central prison since 2017. However, due to the deterioration in his health as a result of the after-effects of the torture he suffered, Léonidas Nyandwi was transferred to Bujumbura central prison in January 2019 to be close to specialist doctors. Finally, towards the end of January 2024, he was operated on at the Roi Khaled hospital, but unfortunately, he was returned to Bujumbura central prison just one day after his operation because the prison administration had not been able to pay the sum of four million Burundi francs (4,000,000 Fbu) demanded by the CHUK to continue

² Resistance for the Rule of Law.

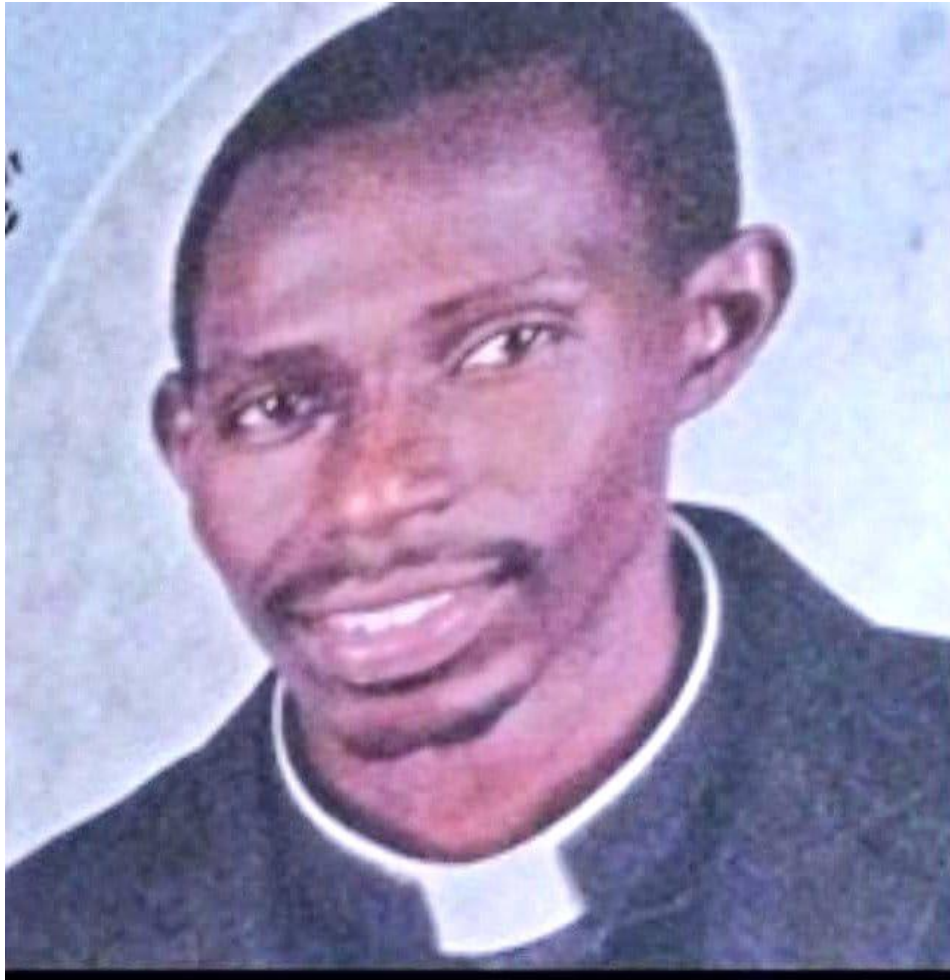
his treatment. Since then, Léonidas Nyandwi has been bedridden in the dispensary at Mpimba prison with a urinary catheter to help him urinate.

SOS-Torture deplores the repeated violation of the rights of detainees, in particular their right to appropriate health care, which constitutes a flagrant violation by the State of Burundi of its international commitments to which it has subscribed. Indeed, the deprivation of health care to the victim constitutes a violation of article 7 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which prohibits the use of torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, and of article 10, which imposes the obligation to treat all persons deprived of their liberty with humanity and with respect for the inherent dignity of the human person.

It calls on the prison authorities to immediately provide the health care required by the critical state of health of the prisoner Léonidas Nyandwi, who is in danger of dying if nothing is done to save his life in distress.

3. Kidnapping or enforced disappearance

- Information reaching SOS-Torture Burundi has revealed that Father Olivier Ndayikengurukiye (see photo below), a priest in the Missionaries of Africa congregation carrying out his mission in Mozambique, was abducted by unidentified individuals on the evening of Friday 4 October 2024 in the city of Bujumbura (western Burundi).



According to sources in his family, Father Olivier Ndayikengurukiye, born in 1984 on the hill and commune of Nyabiraba, in the province of Bujumbura, was on holiday in Burundi at the priests' convent in the locality of Kiriri in the city of Bujumbura. On the day of his abduction, Olivier Ndayikengurukiye had gone to visit his brother in the same town. On his return, he got into a taxi with the number plate KA0918, but did not arrive at his destination at the convent.

According to the same sources, three members of his family and a priest received a message via the victim's telephone warning them that Father Olivier was no longer in possession of his telephone and asking them to identify him. His family searched everywhere for him without success, including the SNR headquarters, where SNR officials denied holding him, but curiously forbade them to reveal his whereabouts.



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This implies that Father Olivier Ndayikengurukiye was abducted by agents of this service, which is renowned for its unpunished human rights violations.

SOS-Torture Burundi has learned that he was released by the National Intelligence Service on Saturday afternoon, October 12, after a week of torture.

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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