



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. 462 PUBLISHED ON 20 OCTOBER 2024

This report by SOS-Torture Burundi covers the period from 12 to 19 October 2024 concerning cases of human rights violations in Burundi.

During this period, at least two (2) people were murdered by officers of the Burundi National Police (PNB) in the provinces of Muyinga and Rumonge.

The report also deplores the case of one (1) detainee who was seriously injured by a police officer in the province of Cibitoke and one (1) student who was abducted in the city of Bujumbura.

1. Violation of the right to life

- On the morning of Tuesday 15 October 2024, a woman known as Belyse Nimpagaritse died in Rumonge hospital (south-west Burundi) as a result of injuries inflicted on her by officers of the Burundi National Police (PNB) when she was arrested for illegally selling loincloths in the Nyakayamba locality of the town of Rumonge.

According to witnesses, Belyse Nimpagaritse was arrested the previous night at around 9pm by police officers at a roadblock in the Nyakayamba district, in possession of 20 loincloths that she was trying to smuggle into the town of Rumonge. She was then abruptly taken off a motorbike carrying her by a police non-commissioned officer called Florence (nicknamed Fofu), who brutally beat her before throwing her to the ground. She immediately lost consciousness.

The same sources said that police agents tried to evacuate her to Rumonge hospital, where doctors confirmed injuries to her neck, ribs and knees, as well as trauma to her spleen as a result of the violent blows she had received.

SOS-Torture Burundi deplores the violence perpetrated by PNB officers, which goes unpunished because of negative solidarity within the police hierarchy. It is calling for a thorough investigation to identify the perpetrators of Belyse Nimpagaritse's murder and punish them in accordance with the law.

- On the night of Wednesday 16 October 2024, a man known as Zambolin Mbarushimana, aged 40, was murdered by a policewoman nicknamed "Mama wa Reta¹" on the Gatongati hill in the Rugari zone, in the commune and province of Muyinga (north-east Burundi).

According to witnesses, Zambolin Mbarushimana was shot at close range while carrying two cans of petrol on her bicycle.

The same sources said that some men who were shocked by this heinous crime violently beat the policewoman and seriously injured her face after disarming her.

SOS-Torture Burundi deplores the behaviour of certain PNB officers who misuse firearms and calls on the Inspectorate General of the Burundi National Police to organise training without delay on the basic principles of the legal use of coercion, with particular emphasis on the key principles of legality, necessity, proportionality and responsibility.

2. Infringement of the right to physical integrity

- On the night of Friday 18 October 2024, at around 9pm, a public transport bus driver known as Gédéon Nzitonda was seriously injured in the neck (see photo below) by bullets fired by an intoxicated police officer in the main town of Buganda commune, in the province of Cibitoke (north-west Burundi).

¹ Mother of government.



According to witnesses, Gédéon Nzitonda was hit in the neck by two bullets fired by police agent Moïse Nkurunziza as he tried to guide him towards the Buganda communal police station.

The same sources said that residents near the scene of the crime rushed the policeman, beating him severely and causing serious injuries to his face.

SOS-Torture Burundi is calling for the arrest of policeman Moïse Nkurunziza so that he can be brought to justice and punished in accordance with the law.

3. Kidnapping or enforced disappearance

- Since Wednesday 16 October 2024, a young man known as Béni Gakunzi, aged 25, has been missing in the town of Bujumbura (western Burundi).

According to sources in his family, Béni Gakunzi (see photo below), who was born in the Musaga zone and lives in the Gatunguru district, was abducted on his way home from his cousin's house in Mutanga Nord.



Since that day, members of the family of Béni Gakunzi, a first-year civil engineering student at the University of Lake Tanganyika, have searched everywhere for him, including police cells, without success.



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SOS-Torture Burundi is asking the Head of State, Evariste Ndayishimiye, to take appropriate measures to put a stop to the phenomenon of abductions, often followed by enforced disappearances, carried out by agents of the National Intelligence Service (SNR), the Burundi National Police (PNB) or the Burundi National Defence Force (FDNB).

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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