

SOS-TORTURE Burundi REPORT NO. 489 PUBLISHED ON 27 APRIL 2025

This report by SOS-Torture Burundi covers the period from 19 to 26 April 2025 and documents cases of human rights violations committed in Burundi.

During this period, three (3) people were murdered in the provinces of Gitega, Kayanza and Kirundo.

The report also notes the case of two (2) journalists who were arbitrarily arrested in Bujumbura City Hall as well as one (1) activist of the CNL (National Congress for Freedom) party who disappeared in Bujumbura province.

1. Violations of the right to life

- On Monday, April 21, 2025, at around 9 p.m., unidentified individuals hacked to death with a machete a man named Jean Kabonerano, about 600 meters from his home located on Gitwenzi hill, Murungurira zone, Ntega commune, Kirundo province.

According to his wife's testimony, the two were ambushed on their way home from sharing a beer at a local bistro. While his wife managed to escape by screaming for help, the assailants attacked her husband with machetes, causing his death on the spot.

Local authorities and security services, alerted immediately, went to the scene and ordered the evacuation of the body to Ntega hospital.

SOS-Torture Burundi calls for a thorough and impartial investigation to identify the perpetrators of this heinous crime so that they can be brought to justice and punished in accordance with the law.

- On Wednesday, April 23, 2025, at around 7 p.m., the lifeless body of Déo Bakevyumusaya, 55, was found on the hill of Rukobe II, in Itaba commune, Gitega province.

According to witnesses, the body was lying in a pool of blood and had head trauma caused by machete blows. The same sources said that the exact circumstances of the murder have not yet been elucidated, although suspicions of witchcraft have been raised as a probable motive for the crime.

The victim's body was evacuated to the Buhoro health center before being buried the next day.

SOS-Torture Burundi calls for a rigorous investigation to determine the circumstances of Déo Bakevyumusaya's murder, identify the perpetrators and bring them to justice in accordance with the law.

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

- On the morning of Monday, April 21, 2025, agents of the National Intelligence Service (SNR) and the National Police of Burundi (PNB) arbitrarily arrested two Burundian journalists working for private radio stations, namely Willy Kwizera (Radio Bonesha FM) and Ahmed Masudi Mugiraneza (Radio Scolaire Nderagakura).

The facts occurred while covering a peaceful sit-in organized by the clients of a microfinance called "Ineza" at the Kinama market, Ntakangwa commune, in Bujumbura City Hall. This financial institution, declared bankrupt, had suddenly closed its doors in January 2025, sparking protests from its former customers, who accuse it of not having repaid their savings.

According to witnesses, SNR agents and police quickly surrounded the site of the rally and arrested several demonstrators (about fifty people), as well as the two journalists.

They were accused of covering the sit-in without prior permission from the local administration and supporting an alleged insurgency aimed at disrupting the electoral process.

Despite the presentation of their press cards issued by the National Communication Council (CNC), the two journalists and the arrested demonstrators were taken to the Bujumbura municipal police station, in the premises of the former Special Research Bureau (BSR).

SOS-Torture Burundi has learned that the two journalists and about 50 demonstrators were released the same day, in the early evening, following an intervention by the National Communication Council and the director of Radio Scolaire Nderagakura.

The organization urges the Burundian authorities to fully guarantee press freedom and to organize training for law enforcement officials on the role, missions and functioning of the media in Burundi.

3. Cases of abduction or enforced disappearance

- On Monday, April 21, 2025, in the morning, unidentified individuals kidnapped Christophe Masemo, zonal treasurer of the CNL party loyal to Agathon Rwaso, in the area of Maramvya, commune of Mutimbuzi, province of Bujumbura.

According to statements from his family, Christophe Masemo, who lives at the 15th Maramvya transversal road, was last seen while supervising day labourers in the locality's rice mills.

According to testimonies collected from the inhabitants, a certain Gaddafi, nicknamed "Rwasa", a member of the Imbonerakure youth league, was involved in this kidnapping. He is said to have lured Christophe Masemo into an ambush under the pretext of buying rice plants from him. Since that day, the victim's mobile phones have been unreachable.

SOS-Torture Burundi calls for the opening of an urgent and thorough investigation, starting with the hearing of the Imbonerakure cited in the case, in order to shed light on the circumstances of this enforced disappearance and to find Christophe Masemo.



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 initiated with the aim of informing national and international opinion about the serious human rights violations underway in Burundi through monitoring reports, particularly on torture, arbitrary arrests, enforced disappearances, sexual violence and summary executions.

This initiative to inform about the realities of the country followed the carnage of a hundred people killed during the day of December 11 and December 12, 2015 by police and soldiers under the pretext of pursuing rebels who had just attacked military camps located on the outskirts of the capital.

The affected areas are said to be protest areas of President Nkurunziza's third term, namely Musaga, Mutakura, Cibitoke, Nyakabiga, Jabe, the last two being located in the center of the Bujumbura City Hall.