

SOS-TORTURE Burundi REPORT NO. 488 PUBLISHED ON 20 APRIL 2025

This report of SOS-Torture Burundi covers the period from 12 to 19 April 2025 and documents cases of human rights violations committed in Burundi.

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

The report also notes the case of three (3) leaders of the National Congress for Freedom (CNL), loyal to Agathon Rwasa, arbitrarily arrested in the provinces of Gitega and Makamba, as well as one (1) person reported missing in Bujumbura town hall.

1. Violations of the right to life

- On Sunday, April 13, 2025, in broad daylight, a 29-year-old detainee named Jean Marie Hakizimana was killed by a police officer in charge of his guard while trying to escape from the cell of the provincial police station in Gitega. He was detained on charges of stealing a mobile phone.

According to witnesses, Jean Marie Hakizimana, a mechanic's assistant by profession, took advantage of a moment when he was going to the toilet to try to flee. He was chased by Master Corporal Evode Louis Niyonsaba, who opened fire, wounding him with two bullets before finishing him off with a bayonet, stabbing him in the chest.

SOS-Torture Burundi demands the immediate opening of criminal proceedings against the perpetrator of this homicide, who remains at large despite the flagrante delicto of the crime.

- On Tuesday, April 15, 2025, at around 10 p.m., Venancie Ndikumasabo, a 65-year-old woman, was murdered in a grenade attack at her home, located on Nyempundu hill, in Mugina commune, Cibitoke province.

According to residents of Nyempundu, in the Nyamakarabo area, a grenade was thrown through the window of his bedroom, causing his death instantly.

The same sources indicate that Venancie Ndikumasabo, a mother of eight, had just won a land lawsuit against some members of her in-laws, relating to a four-hectare plot of land that had been in dispute for more than twenty years.

SOS-Torture Burundi calls for an impartial and rigorous investigation to identify the perpetrators of this murder and bring them to justice in accordance with the law.

- On Saturday, April 19, 2025, in the afternoon, the lifeless body of a young woman identified as Nadine Bukuru was found in the Ruvyironza River, in Giheta commune, Gitega province.

According to her family's statements, Nadine Bukuru had recently given birth to a premature child, placed in an incubator at the Gitega regional hospital. On the night of Thursday, April 17, 2025, at around 9:30 p.m., she reportedly left the hospital to go to a shop to buy some items, but she never returned and has been missing since that date.

SOS-Torture Burundi calls for the opening of a serious and independent investigation in order to determine the exact circumstances of this murder, identify the perpetrators and bring them to justice in accordance with the law.

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

- Information sent to SOS-Torture Burundi reveals that Désiré Hatungimana, a 32-year-old member of the CNL party, has been arbitrarily detained for more than a week in the police cell in the commune of Makebukoko in the province of Gitega.

According to family members, Désiré Hatungimana was arrested on April 8, 2025 when he went to the communal police station on his own to file a complaint against two Imbonerakure, including the local CNDD-FDD leader, Emmanuel Ntibashirakandi. The latter had accused him, without proof, of having organised clandestine night meetings and of possessing leaflets hostile to the head of state.

SOS-Torture Burundi demands the immediate release of Désiré Hatungimana and calls on the authorities to put an end to this arbitrary detention, which is contrary to the principles of the rule of law.

- On Monday, April 14, 2025, in broad daylight, members of the Imbonerakure youth league¹, with the support of the municipal police commissioner in Kayogoro, arbitrarily arrested two activists of the opposition party CNL (National Congress for Freedom), namely Thierry Gatore and Thierry Ndayishimiye. They were taken to the jail in the commune of Kayogoro, in Makamba province.

According to eyewitnesses, the two activists were arrested on trumped-up charges, implicating them in the spread of anonymous leaflets attributed to a group called the Burundi Democracy Liberation Force (BDLF-Abisezerano). These leaflets were found in several localities in the provinces of Makamba and Rutana, although their exact origin remains unknown.

SOS-Torture Burundi calls for the immediate release of Thierry Gatore and Thierry Ndayishimiye who are arbitrarily detained on the basis of simple unfounded suspicions.

¹ Members of the youth league affiliated to the ruling CNDD-FDD (National Council for the Defense of Democracy-Forces for the Defense of Democracy) party.

3. Cases of abduction or enforced disappearance

- Since Tuesday, April 15, 2025, in the morning, Aimable Nkunzumwami, advisor to the Ministry of Youth, Sports and Culture, has been missing when he had gone to his home post as usual.

According to members of his family, Aimable Nkunzumwami, also a national youth representative of the CNL pro-Agathon Rwaswa party, has not given any sign of life since that day and his phone remains switched off.

SOS-Torture Burundi calls for the opening of a thorough and urgent investigation to determine the circumstances of this disappearance and to find Aimable Nkunzumwami, safe and sound.

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.