

SOS-TORTURE Burundi REPORT NO. 494 PUBLISHED ON 1 JUNE 2025

This report by SOS-Torture Burundi covers the period from 25 to 31 May 2025 and documents cases of human rights violations committed in Burundi.

During this period, one (1) person was murdered in Gitega province.

The report also notes several cases of political intolerance and electoral violence recorded in different regions of the country.

1. Violation of the right to life

- According to information gathered by SOS-Torture Burundi, on Thursday, May 22, 2025, during the day, the lifeless body of a young man identified as Aboubakar Nsengiyumva, 32 years old, was found in a valley separating the Karera I and Karera II neighborhoods, in downtown Gitega.

According to eyewitnesses, Aboubakar Nsengiyumva was seen climbing the wall of a plot of land belonging to a certain Vianney Nsengimana, with the aim of stealing clothes. He was then chased by residents of the neighborhood. During his escape, he fell into a ditch before being violently hit with clubs, which led to his death instantly.

The same sources specify that the body of Aboubakar Nsengiyumva was buried the next day, without any investigation having been opened to identify and prosecute the perpetrators of this act.

SOS-Torture Burundi calls on the competent authorities to conduct an impartial investigation in order to identify those responsible for this murder and bring them to justice.

2. Political intolerance and electoral violence

- The period from 25 to 31 May 2025, as in previous weeks since the start of the election campaign, was marked by a climate of political intolerance and electoral violence, characterised by intimidation, death threats and targeted attacks against opposition party activists, as well as supporters of independent candidates.

This worrying situation has been observed in several localities in the country, with the alleged involvement of local officials of the ruling party, the CNDD-FDD (National Council for the Defense of Democracy–Forces for the Defense of Democracy), members of the Imbonerakure militia, police and local administrators.

Here are a few examples.

1. Persecution of motorcycle taxi drivers in Gitega

Since May 25, 2025, several motorcycle taxi drivers who participated in a meeting of the "Burundi Bwa Bose" coalition in the province of Gitega have been victims of persecution orchestrated by Imbonerakure and police officers. The latter carry out arbitrary arrests and the illegal confiscation of their motorcycles. Currently, the majority of these drivers are living in hiding, fearing arrest and loss of livelihood.

2. Public incitement to the murder of opposition members in Giharo (Rutana)

On Tuesday, May 27, 2025, during a congress of the CNDD-FDD party held on Kibimba hill, Butezi area, Giharo commune (Rutana province), several local officials of the ruling party, including Zacharie Batungwanayo (head of the hill), Léonard Ruhoranyi, Cyriaque Komezurugendo alias Komezumusonga (party leader in the area), Jean Arakaza and Françoise Nivyimana (candidates for the legislative elections) publicly called for the assassination of members of the UPRONA party. The people targeted are Usuël Ntarutimana (communal representative), Théoneste Djuma (zonal representative) and Venant Nyobeye (active activist). The officials said that the assassination of these opponents would be a "way to guarantee the stability of the municipality of Giharo".

3. Destruction of opposition party symbols and arbitrary summonses to Mpanda (Bubanza)

On the same day, Tuesday, May 27, 2025, thirteen flags of opposition parties, not four from the "Burundi Bwa Bose" coalition and nine from the Sahwanya FRODEBU party, planted along the Mpanda-Kizina road, were torn down and stolen by Imbonerakure from Gahwazi hill, Mpanda commune (Bubanza province). In addition, Isaïe Pfagutunga (representative of the coalition in the Musenyi area) and Stany Ndereyimana were arbitrarily summoned by the head of the hill of Musenyi, Gervais Ndahabonye, to report to his office on Saturday, May 31, 2025 at 11 a.m.



According to testimonies, they were forced to collect voter cards from members of their families to hand them over to this chief of the hill, as a form of political pressure.

4. Arbitrary detention of women traders in Rugombo (Cibitoke)

On Wednesday, May 28, 2025, several women fruit traders were arbitrarily detained for about six hours at a CNDD-FDD office in Rugombo commune, Cibitoke province. Their only fault would have been to have participated, on May 23, 2025, in a meeting of the independent candidate Thomas Nzeyimana alias Mkombozi. During their detention, the women were forced to wear CNDD-FDD uniforms, which is a serious violation of their freedom of thought, conscience and dignity.

The incidents reported during the period from 25 to 31 May 2025 reflect a worrying increase in acts of political intolerance and serious violations of civil and political rights in several provinces of Burundi, in the run-up to legislative, communal and hill elections.

Documented facts show the instrumentalization of local institutions, law enforcement and party structures to intimidate, harass and repress members of the opposition, supporters of independent candidates and citizens peacefully expressing their political opinions. The impunity enjoyed by the perpetrators of these acts only aggravates the mistrust of the electoral process.

SOS-Torture Burundi calls on the national authorities, in particular the Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI), to guarantee a free, peaceful and inclusive electoral environment, and urges the judicial authorities to open serious investigations into the reported facts, with a view to punishing those responsible and preventing further violations.

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.