

SOS-TORTURE Burundi REPORT NO. 497 PUBLISHED ON 22 JUNE 2025

This report by SOS-Torture Burundi covers the period from 14 to 21 June 2025 and documents cases of human rights violations committed on Burundian territory.

During this period, four (4) people were murdered in the province of Cibitoke and in the town hall of Bujumbura.

The report also reports the arbitrary arrest of one (1) priest by agents of the National Intelligence Service (SNR) in the province of Rumonge, as well as the kidnapping of two (2) people in Bujumbura town hall.

1. Violation of the right to life

- On Monday, June 16, 2025, in the afternoon, a uniformed soldier, armed with a Kalashnikov-type rifle, shot dead a young Lumicash money transfer agent, Chantal Nizigiyimana, at close range in the heart, in the Gikungu district, Gihosha zone, Ntahangwa commune, in Bujumbura City Hall.

According to the testimonies of Gikungu residents, the individual, whose identity remains unknown, presented himself to Chantal Nizigiyimana, a native of Mugozi hill, commune and province of Bururi, and resident of Gikungu, to ask her for a deposit into his account. Under the pretext of having forgotten his money at his home in the same district, he asked the girl to accompany him there in order to proceed with the refund.

When they arrived in a cassava field, the soldier shot Chantal Nizigiyimana several times in the heart, killing her instantly. He then fled after stealing two of the victim's mobile phones, as well as a sum of money not yet determined. The body was

evacuated to the morgue by decision of the administrative and security authorities, who intervened after the commission of the crime.

SOS-Torture Burundi urges the competent authorities to conduct a prompt, impartial and thorough investigation in order to identify, arrest and bring to justice the perpetrator of this crime, in accordance with the law.

- On Wednesday, June 18, 2025, in the afternoon, at around 1 p.m., the lifeless body of police officer Obed Niyonkuru (see photo below) was found in the morgue of the Prince Regent Charles Hospital, located in the commune of Mukaza, in Bujumbura City Hall, after a week of enforced disappearance.



According to members of his family, Obed Niyonkuru, from Kirasira hill, Butezi commune, Ruyigi province, had presented himself at his workstation as usual on the day of his disappearance, Wednesday, June 11, 2025. At around 9 a.m., he had contacted his wife to ask for financial support to support herself. She promised to

send him the money at the end of the day. At around 3 p.m., she carried out the transfer and tried to call him to inform him, without success. She continued to reach him several times, without answer. At around 8 p.m., his phone was already off.

His family began searches the next day, without result, particularly at his workstation, at his home in the Buyenzi police camp, as well as in several dungeons in the city of Bujumbura.

SOS-Torture Burundi urges the administration of the Prince Regent Charles Hospital to clarify the circumstances under which Obed Niyonkuru's body was transferred to the morgue, including the identity of those who brought him there.

The organization is also calling for a thorough, impartial and independent investigation to shed light on the circumstances of Obed Niyonkuru's death, identify those responsible and bring them to justice in accordance with the law.

- On Thursday, June 19, 2025, in the morning, the lifeless bodies of two young Imbonerakure, Karenzo Nsanzamahoro and Claude Butoyi, were discovered on the banks of the Ruhwa River, at the foot of Nyamakarabo hill, Mugina commune, in the province of Cibitoke, on the border with Rwanda.

According to eyewitnesses, the bodies showed clear signs of violence, suggesting that they were killed with sticks. The victims were reportedly intercepted by unidentified individuals while attempting to smuggle approximately 80 kg of coffee into Rwanda.

SOS-Torture Burundi calls for the opening of a rigorous, impartial and thorough investigation in order to elucidate the circumstances of the double murder, identify the perpetrators and bring them to justice, in accordance with the law.

2. Violation of the right to freedom of movement: arbitrary arrest and detention

- On Sunday, June 15, 2025, in the morning, agents of the National Intelligence Service (SNR) arrested Father Paul Butoyi, parish priest of the parish of the Immaculate Heart of Mary in Mutumba, just after a mass he had just celebrated at the Catholic branch of Gitaza, commune of Muhuta, province of Rumonge. He was then taken to an unknown destination.

According to eyewitnesses, Father Paul Butoyi (see photo below) was arrested because of remarks made during his homily, during which he criticized the conduct of the legislative and communal elections of June 5, 2025. However, according to several faithful present at the celebration, the priest had instead spoken out against the persistent ethnic divisions within Burundian society, which he described as "".



According to concordant sources, Father Paul Butoyi was taken to the dungeon of the SNR headquarters in Bujumbura.

SOS-Torture Burundi learned that he was released the next day, on the afternoon of 16 June, after spending a day in arbitrary detention.

3. Cases of abduction or enforced disappearance

- On Wednesday, June 18, 2025, at around 4 p.m., military police (PM) officers abducted Bonfils Kaneza, 37, a lawyer, married and father of two, near the headquarters of the National Intelligence Service (SNR), in the Rohero zone, commune of Mukaza, in Bujumbura town hall. He was taken in a military vehicle to an unknown destination.

According to eyewitnesses, Bonfils Kaneza, a native of the Musaga district, was in a taxi when it was intercepted on Ngozi Avenue by a military police pick-up vehicle. Heavily armed soldiers then got out of the vehicle, forcibly dragged him out of the taxi, beat him and then brutally loaded him into their vehicle.

SOS-Torture Burundi has learned that Bonfils Kaneza was released the same evening, at nightfall, without the reasons for his abduction being communicated.

- On Wednesday, June 18, 2025, in the afternoon, around 3 p.m., officers of the Burundi National Police (PNB) abducted a man known as Innocent Ndayizeye, 38, in the Nyabagere neighborhood, Gihosha zone, Ntahangwa commune, in Bujumbura City Hall. He was forcibly loaded into a PNB pick-up vehicle and then driven to an unknown destination.

According to eyewitnesses, Innocent Ndayizeye was in front of a shop near a bar-restaurant known as "Resto Fungus chez Lenin", in a locality called "Kumatafari", when the vehicle stopped in front of him. Suddenly, six police officers got out, rushed at him and violently threw him into the back of the vehicle, before hurrying away.

According to his family members, Innocent Ndayizeye's fate remains uncertain and his phone has been turned off since his abduction.

SOS-Torture Burundi expresses its deep concern at the upsurge in kidnappings by law enforcement officers and calls on the police authorities to reveal without delay the place of detention and the reason for the arrest of Innocent Ndayizeye.

In conclusion, the cases documented this week by SOS-Torture Burundi illustrate a worrying upsurge in serious human rights violations, including targeted killings, enforced disappearances, arbitrary abductions and attacks on the freedom of religious, lawyers and ordinary citizens. These acts are mostly perpetrated by state agents or security forces, often with total impunity.

This situation reflects a persistent deterioration of the rule of law and the instrumentalization of security institutions for political repression, in defiance of constitutional guarantees and Burundi's international commitments.

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.