



## JOINT STATEMENT

**SOS–Torture Burundi & Raoul Wallenberg Centre for Human Rights, on the occasion of International Human Rights Day**

**December 10, 2025**

On this International Human Rights Day, SOS–Torture Burundi and the Raoul Wallenberg Centre for Human Rights unite their voices to urgently and solemnly sound the alarm to national, regional, and international public opinion about the severe, persistent, and structural deterioration of the human rights situation in Burundi, as well as the alarming situation of Burundian refugees in the United Republic of Tanzania.

Over the course of 2025, Burundi has once again been deeply marked by grave and repeated violations of fundamental rights, reflecting a persistent deterioration of the human rights situation. Arbitrary arrests, illegal and prolonged detentions without trial, acts of torture, enforced disappearances; alleged extrajudicial executions, unfair trials, and targeted intimidation against human rights defenders, journalists, political opponents, and civil society have been widely documented.

The 2025 electoral context strengthened the climate of fear and repression. The process was marked by militarization, the instrumentalization of the justice system, the systematic repression of the opposition, the censorship of independent media, and the mass arrests of citizens for mere political opinions.

Credible testimonies supported by substantial documentation also report torture inflicted in the detention cells of the National Intelligence Service (SNR) and in unofficial detention sites, in a context of near-complete impunity.

Prison conditions in Burundi remain inhumane and degrading, as documented notably by ACAT-Burundi and APRODH. These organizations report extreme overcrowding, chronic malnutrition, very limited access to medical care, prolonged detention without trial, and arbitrary restrictions on family visits. These conditions amount to cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment and reflect an alarming collapse of the fundamental guarantees of the rule of law and human dignity.

Meanwhile, more than 110,000 Burundian refugees remain in Tanzania, facing extremely precarious living conditions. According to the “Advocacy Note on Discrimination, Pressure, Enforced Disappearances, and Forced Repatriation of Burundian Refugees in Tanzania” published by CDH/VICAR, these refugees are subjected to systematic pressure, targeted discrimination, threats, and practices akin to forced repatriation disguised as voluntary return, in flagrant violation of the fundamental principle of non-refoulement.

These practices expose refugees to serious risks of persecution, arbitrary detention, and enforced disappearance once returned to Burundi. The closure of schools in the camps, drastic reductions in food aid, and the deterioration of health services severely worsen the situation of vulnerable persons—children, women, and the elderly.

Given the extreme gravity of this situation, SOS–Torture Burundi and the Raoul Wallenberg Centre for Human Rights issue urgent and solemn calls:

- To the Burundian government: to put an immediate end to human rights violations, guarantee the effective independence of the judiciary, release arbitrarily detained persons, protect human rights defenders, and restore fundamental freedoms;
- To the Tanzanian authorities and UNHCR, to suspend without delay all processes of forced repatriation, ensure the effective protection of Burundian refugees, and fully comply with their international obligations;
- To the international community, the African Union, and the United Nations, to strengthen monitoring mechanisms, maintain diplomatic pressure on Burundi, and actively support independent civil society organizations.

On this International Human Rights Day, we solemnly reaffirm our unwavering commitment to victims, refugees, human rights defenders, and all oppressed populations.



SOS - TORTURE / BURUNDI

We will tirelessly continue our mission of documentation, denunciation, advocacy, and international mobilization until truth, justice, reparation, and effective safeguards against future abuses are secured.

Sincerely,

*Judith Abitan*

*Executive Director RWCHR*

*Aimé KWIZERA*

*President SOS-Torture/Burundi*