



## **Joint Statement between SOS-Torture Burundi and the Raoul Wallenberg Centre for Human Rights on the March 31, 2026 Fire in Bujumbura**

SOS-Torture Burundi and the Raoul Wallenberg Centre for Human Rights express their deep concern following the fire that occurred on March 31, 2026, at the site known as “Base,” located in Bujumbura. This incident caused an explosion at a munitions depot, resulting in significant human and material damage.

According to available information, the fire triggered successive explosions whose shockwaves affected several surrounding neighborhoods, causing the destruction or damage of numerous civilian homes as well as infrastructure.

The following day, the spokesperson of the Burundian army, Gaspard Baratuza, released an official report indicating that 13 civilians were killed, 57 injured, and that there was considerable material damage in several neighborhoods of the city, including areas relatively far from the military site.

However, to date, the exact circumstances that led to the fire, as well as the precise number of victims particularly the real number of those killed, injured, or displaced remain uncertain. This situation raises serious concerns among the population and human rights organizations. The lack of complete and transparent information raises legitimate questions about the safety conditions surrounding the storage of munitions near residential areas, as well as the effective protection of civilian populations.

More broadly, this situation is part of a troubling context characterized by a recurring lack of transparency and communication on matters of public interest by the Burundian authorities. It highlights the need for the government to strengthen its duty to inform and its obligation to be accountable to the population, particularly when situations arise that may compromise citizens' safety.

The lack of information and transparency not only undermines public trust but may also contribute to human rights violations.

In light of this situation, SOS-Torture Burundi and the Raoul Wallenberg Centre for Human Rights express their serious concern and recommend that the Burundian government:

- Fully clarify the circumstances and causes of the fire by conducting an independent, impartial, transparent, and prompt investigation, in accordance with international standards relating to the protection of the right to life to establish the facts and determine accountability;
- Ensure official, regular, and transparent communication on developments, particularly by publishing a comprehensive and verified account of the victims, including those killed, injured, displaced, or who suffered material losses;
- Establish appropriate, fair, and effective mechanisms for reparation and compensation, in accordance with international principles relating to the right to a remedy and reparation, for the benefit of the families of the deceased and all affected persons;
- Guarantee adequate care for victims, including access to healthcare, psychosocial support, and humanitarian assistance for those affected.

SOS-Torture Burundi and the Raoul Wallenberg Centre for Human Rights reiterate their solidarity with the victims and their families and call on the authorities to take all necessary measures to prevent such tragedies in the future. They also emphasize the importance of increased transparency and responsible communication by authorities, particularly when public safety is at stake.