

SOS-TORTURE BURUNDI REPORT NO. 561 PUBLISHED ON 14 SEPTEMBER 2026

This report by SOS-Torture Burundi covers the period from 5 to 13 September 2026. It documents cases of human rights violations committed on Burundian territory.

During this period, three (3) people were arbitrarily arrested, in circumstances similar to abductions in Bujumbura province.

The upsurge and recurrence of crime in Burundi continues to raise concerns about respect for human rights and the protection of the population. Arbitrary arrests and detentions attributed to agents of the National Intelligence Service (SNR) raise serious concerns about the respect of the right to life of victims and the safety of victims. Cases of enforced disappearances or extrajudicial executions continue to be documented by human rights organizations.

These new cases are in addition to those documented in the previous report, which reported the killing of two (2) people and the serious injury of one (1) person in Gitega province.

1. Violation of the right to freedom of movement: arbitrary arrests and detentions

- Since Monday, September 7, 2026, Jacques Nyandwi, a resident of Gako Hill, in the commune of Mpanda, Bujumbura province, has been arbitrarily detained in the communal cell of Mpanda. This detention follows a land dispute between him and François Nzorubara, presented as one of the leaders of the Imbonerakure¹ of Gako Hill.

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).

According to eyewitnesses, François Nzorubara burned down Jacques Nyandwi's house, as well as all of his belongings, while he was living there with his wife and their four children. The following day, François Nzorubara, accompanied by three members of the Imbonerakure, arbitrarily arrested Jacques Nyandwi before taking him to the cell of the commune of Mpanda where he has been detained for a week, without having been questioned by a judicial police officer (OPJ).

In addition, the same members of the Imbonerakure also demolished the house in which Jacques Nyandwi's wife and their children had sought refuge. They also allegedly threatened the owner of this house, who was eventually forced to expel them.

Faced with this situation, Jacques Nyandwi's wife and their children even went to the office of the communal administrator of Mpanda to request his intervention, but their approach did not result in any assistance.

SOS-Torture Burundi calls on the competent judicial and administrative authorities to take all necessary measures without delay to put an end to the arbitrary detention of Jacques Nyandwi and to guarantee his immediate release, to ensure his protection and that of his family members and to conduct an independent, impartial, thorough and effective investigation in order to bring those responsible to justice, in accordance with the law.

- On Tuesday, September 8, 2026, a Congolese national from the Banyamulenge community, Nkunda Kilayi Jalos (see photo below), was arbitrarily arrested in Bujumbura in the boarding area at Melchior Ndadaye International Airport by agents of the National Intelligence Service (SNR) as he was about to board the RwandAir flight to Rwanda.

According to eyewitnesses, before boarding, police officers called Nkunda Kilayi Jalos over and questioned him to near an SNR vehicle, a general of this service

coordinating the operation was in the boarding area. He was identified as Police Brigadier General Domitien Niyonkuru, Director of the Department of Internal Intelligence (DRI). No information is available on the destination of Nkunda Kilayi Jalos or the place of his detention.



SOS-Torture Burundi calls on the authorities of the National Intelligence Service (SNR) to reveal without delay the fate of Nkunda Kilayi Jalos and the place of his detention.

The organization expresses its deep concern at the increase in arbitrary arrests, detentions or alleged enforced disappearances of members of the Banyamulenge community in Burundi on suspicion of links to the AFC-M23². The arrest of Nkunda

² Alliance Fleuve Congo-Mouvement du 23 mars.

Kilayi Jalos at Melchor Ndadaye International Airport as he was preparing to travel to Rwanda, as well as reports of the arbitrary arrest of Banyamulenge pastors in Bujumbura and Gitega, raise serious concerns about respect for fundamental guarantees of liberty and security for all persons.

These facts are particularly concerning as they come in a political context marked by the mistrust of the Burundian authorities towards Rwanda and by the preparation of the 2027 electoral process. SOS-Torture Burundi fears that the pre-election period will be accompanied by violence and increased surveillance, intimidation and targeted arrests of members of the Banyamulenge community, on the basis of their real or perceived membership, as well as members of the real or perceived opposition.

Consequently, SOS-Torture Burundi calls on the Burundian authorities to immediately put an end to any arrest or detention carried out outside the procedures provided for by law, to reveal without delay the place of detention of any person arrested; and to ensure that such persons have access to their families, legal counsel and the competent judicial authorities.

- On Thursday, September 10, 2026, at approximately 10:00 a.m., Rénovat Nininahazwe (see photo below), a human rights defender in Burundi, 54 years old from the former commune of Rugazi, in the former province of Bubanza, was arbitrarily arrested by police officers near Saint-Michel parish, in Bujumbura.

The police officers forced him into a police vehicle and took him to his home, located in the Ngagara zone, where they carried out a search operation. At the end of this operation, the police seized two laptops, his mobile phone and that of his child.

They then took him to the Judicial Police Commissariat, located in the Bwiza zone, where he was interrogated in office No. 13 by a judicial police officer (OPJ).



According to members of his family, some of his relatives went to the police station around 11:00 a.m. to inquire about his situation. The OPJ in charge of the case asked them to come back later, on the grounds that his interrogation was still ongoing.

As agreed, they returned to the police station at around 1:00 p.m. On arrival, the OPJ reportedly told them that Rénovat Nininahazwe had been taken away by agents of the National Intelligence Service (SNR).

Since then, members of his family have gone to various detention facilities in Bujumbura in an attempt try to find him, but their search has been in vain.

The same sources reveal that Rénovat Nininahazwe, who is married and father of 3 children, feared being arrested because of his collaboration with international human rights bodies and other civil society organizations, as well as advocacy on behalf of aggrieved persons with state bodies. More specifically, he had narrowly avoided arrest at Kobero border crossing on 28 July 2026, upon his return from Rwanda, where he had travelled in connection with one of the cases he was handling.

SOS-Torture Burundi calls on the authorities of the National Intelligence Service (SNR) to reveal without delay the fate and place of detention of Rénovat Nininahazwe, so that his family, friends and the public can be reassured about his situation. They must also guarantee his physical and moral integrity, as well as respect for his fundamental rights throughout the procedure, and take all necessary measures to prevent any enforced disappearance or incommunicado detention.

The organization urges the investigating authorities to strictly comply with the provisions of the Constitution of the Republic of Burundi and the Code of Criminal Procedure, including those relating to the conditions of arrest and detention, the rights of persons deprived of their liberty, access to a lawyer, information for the family and the control of the lawfulness of detention.

Furthermore, if charges are brought against Rénovat Nininahazwe, SOS-Torture Burundi demands that he be brought before the competent judicial authority within the legal deadlines and that he be given all the guarantees of a fair trial or, if not, that he be released immediately and unconditionally.

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.