

## **BURUNDI LEAGUE OF HUMAN RIGHTS " ITEKA "**

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### **Biannual newsletter " ITEKAN'IJAMBO " of the Burundian League of Human Rights " ITEKA "**

**November 2015 - June 2016 : Executive summary**



*In memory of Madame Marie Claudette Kwizera Treasurer Iteka, missing since 10 December 2015. From December 2015 to June 2016, at least 272 cases of enforced disappearances reached Iteka*

This newsletter is a summary of information received by Iteka League from November 2015 to March 2016 and those published in the monthly bulletins for April, May and June 2016.

In terms of the situation of violations and allegations of violations of human rights, the major trends identified include the following: 445 cases of alleged violations and violations of the right to life ; 41 cases of torture, inhuman or degrading treatment with two emblematic cases of death from such acts : Christophe Ngenzwanayo who died following acts of torture in the brigade of Buganda, in Cibitoke province, on April 7, 2016; Onesphore Gashahu, whose age is between 26 and 30, from Nyabisindu village, in the commune and province of Cankuzo, who deceased on March 6, 2016 around 7 pm, in Cankuzo following acts of torture by police in Cankuzo; 272 cases of enforced disappearance, the emblematic case being that of Madame Marie Claudette Kwizera, Treasurer of Iteka League, missing since the evening of 10 December 2015 ; 2254 cases of arbitrary arrest and illegal detention ; 11 cases of gender based violence; 197 cases of injuries and at least 117 Burundian youth including 105 girls and 12 boys victims of human trafficking to the countries of East Africa, Saudi Arabia and the Middle East.

This report also mentions numerous cases of violation of the right to a fair trial in this case, chiefly cases of violations of the right to a fair trial, with many cases of summary trials without the possibility of defense, in violation of the new code of criminal procedure, as well as many criminal cases of defendants who remain untreated.

The phenomenon of corpses is troubling in the country where at least 99 corpses, some unidentified, were recorded during the period covered by this report.

This period was also marked by the discovery of mass graves in several parts of the country. At least nine mass graves have been discovered in different parts of the country namely: Bugarama in Muramvya province, Gatunguru joint Mutimbuzi, Ijenda in Bujumbura Rural province, Mitakataka in Bubanza province, the cemetery of Mpanda Buringa in Town Gihanga Muramvya in Mutimbuzi common, and Kanyosha Kinama in Bujumbura Mayorship.

The violence and the violations have intensified in provinces where there have been protests against the third term of President Pierre Nkurunziza. Bujumbura mayorship leads with at least 272 people killed on the 445 cases ; 122 people injured on 197 ; 250 missing persons on 272 ; 1518 persons arbitrarily arrested over 2254 registered by Iteka League during the period covered by this report. The other most affected provinces are Bujumbura Rural, Bururi, Muyinga and Kirundo. Both provinces are victims of their neighborhood with Rwanda, which is accused by the Burundian government to shelter rebels.

Bujumbura Mayorship recorded the highest of bodies in comparison with other provinces. At least 57 bodies have been identified by Iteka League during the period. The phenomenon is also worrisome in Cankuzo, rural Bujumbura and Gitega provinces.

The report also mentions the emblematic case of children of the third cycle of education of basic school, deprived of the right to education, following the arrest and abusive arbitrary detention. These children were accused of doodles on a photo of President Pierre Nkurunziza found in the science textbook for the 8th class, fundamental school. Schoolchildren were temporarily dismissed and others were forced to pay fines and replacement costs of the books page containing the President's picture that has been torn. Among these students, 69 students were arrested and 621 have been temporarily expelled.

The report also notes violations of the right to public information and freedom of association, as several private medias remain closed and heads of civil society organizations and journalists estimated at fifty were forced to exile in foreign countries as a result of harassment and closure of bank accounts of civil society organizations and destruction of radio stations.

In addition, the security situation characterized by armed attacks and grenade explosions targeting groups of people including many military members of the former Armed Forces of Burundi also took away the lives of many and made many injured.

In conclusion, the various allegations of human rights violations and other security events reported are indicative of the still worrying situation in Burundi. Allegations of violations and security developments highlight, in fact, a political-security situation still unsteady and should challenge the protagonists to get on with the search for durable solutions to restore tranquility in the country. In the light of the developments Iteka recommends the following:

**A) The Government of Burundi:**

- To respect and uphold individual and collective rights and freedoms of its citizens;
- To comply with school rules, as to scrawl phenomenon of the photo of President Pierre Nkurunziza and traitercette position with equity;
- To end and punish the perpetrators of human trafficking that takes alarming proportions in Burundi.

**B) AU**

- To send a military force to protect the population victims of violations;
- To hasten the negotiations between the government and opposition.

**C) At the United Nations Security Council:**

- Take all measures likely to end grave violations of human rights in Burundi;
- To stop the violence against civilians;
- To learn from the consequences on countries that have experienced situations of grave violations of human rights;

**D) The population**

- To stay united and not to yield to the demands and divisive teachings;
- To denounce any act likely to spread or maintain insecurity.