

Approved by Ministerial Order n ° 530/0273 of 10 November 1994 revising Order No. 550 /029 of 6 February 1991



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Weekly bulletin « ITEKA N'IJAMBO » n°84 of the Burundian League of Human Rights "ITEKA"

Week from 6-12 November 2017



In memory of Madam Marie Claudette Kwizera, Treasurer of Iteka, reported missing since December 10, 2015. From December 2015 to 12 November 2017, Iteka has documented at least 463 cases of enforced disappearances.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ADG	: <i>Chief Executive Officer</i>
BSR	: <i>Special Bureau of Investigation</i>
CDS	: <i>Health Center</i>
CECAD	: <i>Saving and Credit Fund for self-development</i>
CNDD-FDD	: <i>National Council for the Defense of Democracy</i>
ICC	: <i>International Criminal Court</i>
DAF	: <i>Finance and Administration Officer</i>
DCE	: <i>Communal Direction of Education</i>
ECOFO	: <i>Fundamental School/Ecole Fondamentale</i>
FAB	: <i>Burundi Armed forces</i>
MSF	: <i>Doctors Without Borders</i>
MSD	: <i>Movement for Solidarity and Development</i>
SNR	: <i>National Intelligence Service</i>
GBV	: <i>Gender Based Violence</i>

0. INTRODUCTION

Allegations and violations of human rights were recorded during this reporting period: at least 8 persons killed including 4 corpses, 1 reported missing, 2 tortured, 50 arbitrarily arrested and 2 GBV victims.

The phenomenon of corpses is still recorded in several parts of the country and no investigation is carried out, which is very worrying.

The Imbonerakure of CNDD-FDD ruling party's youth, SNR agents, policemen as well as administration officials are blamed as the perpetrators of most of human rights violations.

This bulletin reports cases of killings, torture, abduction, and arbitrary arrests of the alleged President Pierre Nkurunziza's 3rd term opponents.

The bulletin rejects impunity of crimes that is granted to pro CNDD-FDD party. Members of this party involved in different crimes enjoy impunity from public complicity.

Intimidation in demonstrations where high ranked officials of the country were present are reported in this bulletin.

This bulletin recommends the government to change the precarious human rights situation in the country.

I. ALLEGATIONS OF VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS

I.1. ALLEGATIONS OF VIOLATIONS OF RIGHT TO LIFE

I.1.1 PERSONS KILLED BY UNIDENTIFIED PEOPLE

A person killed in Gasorwe commune, Muyinga province

On 12 November 2017, on Kizi hill, Gasorwe commune, Muyinga province, Pauline Nkurikiyiki, aged 60, was killed by unidentified people. According to sources on site, she was strangled with a piece of cloth. According to the same sources, the reason of the crime would be a land dispute.

A person killed in Rutana commune and province

On the night of November 12, 2017, at about 11:00 pm, on Gatongati hill, Gitaba zone, Rutana commune and province, Jérôme Ntamavukiro, over 65 years old, was shot dead at home by unidentified people.

A person killed in Mutaho commune, Gitega province

On the night of 10-11 November 2017, at Mutaho commune city in Gitega province, a watchman secured a shop was stabbed by a group of unidentified people who later looted all the goods from this shop.

I.1.2. PEOPLE KILLED BY POLICE

A person killed in Mutimbuzi commune, Bujumbura rural province

On 9 November 2017, around 4:00 pm, on Gatunguru hill, Rubirizi zone, Mutimbuzi commune, Bujumbura Rural Province, Ndikiminwe, from Cibitoke urban zone, Bujumbura city, was shot dead by police officers near the house of a policeman nicknamed Rwembe, according to sources on site.

I.1.3. BODIES FOUND IN BUSH OR OTHER PLACES

A body found in Gihanga commune, Bubanza province

On 6 November 2017, at the 11th street of Buringa zone, Gihanga commune, Bubanza province, the 25-year-old Floride Nibigira living in Musenyi zone, Mpanda commune, was found slaughtered by unidentified people. According to our sources, Jérémie Bigirimana, husband of the victim was arrested and jailed in Mpanda police station for investigation purposes. The corpse was taken to Mpanda Hospital mortuary.

A body found in Rugombo commune, Cibitoke province

On 11 November 2017, an unidentified corpse was found on Mparambo I hill, Rugombo commune, Cibitoke province. According to our sources, the victim was beaten to death by angry population. The corpse was taken to CDS Rugombo. According to an administrative source in Rugombo zone, the victim was a thief.

A body found in Buyengero commune, Rumonge province

On November 7, 2017, a body of one Ndereka was found on Nyacambuko hill, Muzenga zone, Buyengero commune, Rumonge province. The victim lived on this hill and was suspended on an avocado tree. The administrative sources speak of suicide while others say he was strangled and suspended on this tree to simulate suicide.

A body found in Rumonge commune and province

On November 9, 2017, a body of Claude Ndikumwenayo, a worker from the Muremera quarter, Ngozi commune and province, was found in a house in Iteba quarter, Rumonge commune and province. According to police sources, Claude Ndikumwenayo died of a natural death, which his relatives refute.

I.2. PEOPLE ABDUCTED AND REPORTED MISSING

A person abducted in Bugabira commune, Kirundo province

On November 8, 2017, Eric, a teacher at ECOFO Nyamabuye, was arrested by Emmanuel Nsaguye, head of Imbonerakure of Bugabira commune, according to sources on site. He was taken to a destination so far unknown, add the same sources.

I.3. PEOPLE TORTURED BY IMBONERAKURE

A person tortured in Rugombo commune, Cibitoke province

On November 10, 2017, David Maniragaba, CNDD-FDD party member, farmer, of Rusororo hill, Rugombo commune, was tortured by Imbonerakure youths led by an Imbonerakure known as Manigiri. According to our sources, David Maniragaba was accused of not agreeing with those criticizing the ICC decision to investigate crimes committed in Burundi.

A person tortured in Rugombo commune, Cibitoke province

On November 9, 2017, on Mparambo hill II, Rugombo commune, Jean Ndavuga was beaten up by Imbonerakure including Claude Nsabimana. On-site sources indicate that the victim is in critical condition and is receiving treatment at a nearby health center.

I.4. PERSONS ARRESTED BY IMBONERAKURE, SNR AGENTS, POLICE AND ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS

A person arrested in Songa commune, Bururi province

Information received by Iteka Ligue indicates that from November 3, 2017 until November 13, 2017, Mevin Huruma, son of Niyonkuru Emmanuel and Esther Bukuru of Kiryama hill, aged 17, student at Kiryama High School, Songa commune is arbitrarily jailed in Songa commune cell. According to sources on site, Mevin was charged with attempted rape of a 1.8- year old child, named Irishura Aimée Daniela, daughter of Venant Ninyibuka. Sources on site indicate it is a fabrication linked to political motives because his father refused to join CNDD-FDD party.

Thirty-seven people arrested in Bujumbura downtown

On November 6, 2017, police arrested 37 people, including 8 women and 29 men, and took them to BSR cell in Buyenzi urban zone, Mukaza commune, Bujumbura city. According to sources on site, the police were checking irregulars and the release was individual for a ransom whose amount was not revealed by our source from BSR.

A person arrested in Burambi commune, Rumonge province

On November 8, 2017, around 5:00 pm, Tite Nduwayo, teacher at ECOFO Gitaramuka, was arrested by police and taken to Burambi commune police cell, Rumonge province. According to sources on site, he was accused of punishing a student at this school. The teacher's relatives reject these accusations and indicate that Tite Nduwayo is victim of being Tutsi and of having won his case against his unfair redeployment. Friends of this teacher suspect the administrator of Burambi commune, Adelaide Nduwimana and the chair of the ruling party in this commune at the same time adviser of DCE Burambi, Isaac Ndikuriyo, to be behind this arrest. Tite Nduwayo is still jailed in Burambi commune.

Three people arrested in Bwambarangwe commune, Kirundo province

On November 8, 2017, 40-year-old Thierry Muhizi, his 70-year-old father-in-law Gerad Nzigamasabo and 40-year-old Juliette, prefect at Budahunga College, all from Budahunga, Bwambarangwe commune, Kirundo province were arrested and taken to PJ Kirundo, according to sources on site. Juliette was accused of revealing first the disappearance of a professor Thierry Sinigirira. Gérard Nzigamasabo was accused of hiding the professor when the Imbonerakure threatened him. Thierry Muhizi was accused of having good relationships with his father-in-law because he did not report the presence of Thierry Sinigirira in his father-in-law's house.

Three people arrested in Matana commune, Bururi province

On 6 November 2017, three women, including Ndabumvira Marceline from Gitanga hill, Matana commune, Bururi province, were arrested by the police. According to sources on site, the land conflicts are at the origin of this arrest. According to the police, these three women are under the protection of the police against the anger of the population of this hill who wanted to kill them accusing them of bewitching.

A person arrested in Gitega province

On October 7, 2017, around 5:00 pm, Juvénal, former president of MSD provincial committee in Gitega, was arrested and arbitrarily jailed in SNR cell by Blaise, SNR provincial agent in Gitega. He was arrested near SNR provincial office in Gitega located on Gitega-Muyinga road. When he was arrested, he was jogging with other people. He was charged with recruiting fighters and interfering in SNR's affairs. He was released on 9 October 2017, following the intervention of the Regional Police Commissioner in Gitega, Thaddée Birutegusa

Four soldiers arrested in Rohero urban area, Bujumbura City Hall

On November 6, 2017, Colonel Viator Munyankindi, ADG, Major Nestor Bigirimana, DAF, Lieutenant-Colonel Claver Ndikumwami, Supply chain officer and Colonel Antoine Bigayi, all executives of CECAD and ex-FAB, were arrested at the workplace by the police and taken to SNR cell in Rohero urban zone, Mukaza commune, Bujumbura city. Sources on site indicate that their arrest is related to cases of fraudulent management of credits granted to soldiers on peacekeeping missions in Somalia. Relatives of these officials are worried that such a case be handled by the SNR while there is the anti-corruption service and the military prosecutor who should prosecute these soldiers for such accusations. After interrogation, Major Nestor Bigirimana and Lieutenant-Colonel Claver Ndikumwami were released around 10:00 pm and appeared for questioning at the SNR on 7 November 2017.

I.5. INTIMIDATIONS BY CNDD-FDD PARTY MEMBERS

Demonstrations to protests the ICC in the country

On November 11, 2017, protests were held in all provinces of the country to refute the ICC decision to open investigations on crimes committed in Burundi.

As an illustration:

- In Cibitoke province, in Cibitoke province city, young Imbonerakure led by Bucumi, who is responsible for these Imbonerakure on Cibitoke hill, Rugombo commune, beat up people who refused to go to the demonstrations against the decision taken by the ICC.

At Rugombo Communal Technical High School, students were forcibly taken to demonstrate by the director of this high school, Imbonerakure also known as Moussa Manassé Kwizera. After the demonstration, he made the call and those who are absent will lose nine points in education.

- In Bujumbura city, a demonstration was organized by CNDD-FDD party members and some people were forced to attend, mainly bicycles and bikers taxis, according to our sources on site. A gathering of people, among them the unemployed, bicycle taxis, biker taxis, tricycles called "Tuktuk" at the United Nations roundabout, took place and they headed to downtown to Independence square. On their way as at their assembly, songs of war deeds were sung by participants like: *"The battle we waged, dear Bagumyabanga was hard, full of nostalgia"*. In his speech, the Home Affairs Ministry spokesman said the ICC decision is null and void because Burundi has already withdrawn from this court and the document was backdated, he said.

- In Cankuzo Province, at 10:00 am, after community development work, a demonstration took place in Cankuzo province to refute ICC investigations into Burundi. "*Our country is sovereign*", according to Désiré Njiji who read the message from the Home Affairs Ministry, followed by Félicien who had represented the Ministry of Solidarity. In Cendejuru commune, the administrator has warned those who inform social media including "Inzamba" and "Humura" explaining that these people support those who say they fight for human rights while they supported the coup of May 13, 2015. The same speech from the Home Affairs Ministry was read.
- In Mwaro province, the director of Mwaro communal high school, Cassien Niyondiko mobilized the students and forced them to participate in these demonstrations against the ICC. According to sources on site, participants were the students and the bikers taken by force as well as CNDD-FDD party members.

In Kayokwe commune, around 10:00 am, a demonstration was organized until the fiftieth anniversary monument located on Gihinga hill, Mwaro zone. The population rallied to deny investigations that ICC could open on Burundi. At about 11:00 am, at Kigutu Stadium, the governor read the message sent by the government. In this message, one could hear: "*Burundi is a sovereign country and no longer intends to collaborate with the ICC, which even backdates the documents. Citizens must fight against this injustice and bias. However, we must always safeguard peace and security.*" Mwaro High School students were forced to partake in the demonstration.

II. CASES OF GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

Two people raped in Kiremba commune, Ngozi province

On November 6, 2017, around 10:00 pm, at Kiremba commune, Ngozi province, a group of Imbonerakure patrolled. According to our sources, two of them, including Harera, deputy representative of Imbonerakure in Kiremba commune and another named Samuel, broke into a bar and arrested two women from Nyamurenza neighboring commune of the same province accusing them of sowing disorder in this bar. These two Imbonerakure took them away saying they were going to jail them. But after some time, locals found the two women critically ill lying in an unused Youth Center building and took them to Kiremba Hospital for treatment. According to our sources, the doctor confirmed the rape. The two Imbonerakure were arrested on the morning of November 7, 2017 by the police for investigation reasons but are no longer detained and the police say they have escaped.

III. OTHER FACTS REPORTED

Seven people wounded in a gun attack in Giheta commune, Gitega province and Ndava commune, Mwaro province

On the night of November 12, 2017, around 1:00 am, a group of unidentified people armed with rifles, knives and machetes, invaded some households in Ndava commune and zone, according to sources on site. In Ndava commune and zone, Matongo hill, this group has injured Thelesphore Harerimana, Aline Ndayisaba, Emery Irambona and Emmanuel. The same group came from Giheta commune, Gitega province, a border commune with Ndava where it had wounded three people, Juvin Ndereyimana, Catherine Ndayishimiye and Joseph Niyonzima all of Musama hill. All those wounded were taken to Kibimba hospital.

A family threatened in Buhinyuza commune, Muyinga province

On November 10, 2017, Venerande Mukampumvya, accused of bewitchment and her five children from Burenza sub-hill, Kibimba hill, Buhinyuza commune, Muyinga province, took refuge in Muyinga province town following death threat. According to sources on site, they had just spent a week at Buhinyuza commune office, but the commune administrator said he had been overtaken by the phenomenon of obscurantist beliefs and transferred them to the provincial town. Victims accuse Pascal of being at the source of their misfortunes. He would have looted and demolished their house.

Three people injured in Rutana commune and province

On November 7, 2017, at about 9:00 pm, on Matutu hill, Gitaba zone, commune and Rutana province, unidentified armed men in police uniforms looted everything in shops and shot at three people of these shops including Elvis and Justin Nsabimana. The latter were taken directly to Rutana Hospital. Seeing that they were seriously injured, they were transferred to Bujumbura at MSF.

IV. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Human rights violations and allegations of violations following the deteriorating political context since the start of President Pierre Nkurunziza's third term challenge continue to be recorded in various parts of the country.

Killings, abduction, torture, arbitrary and illegal arrests, targeted to CNDD-FDD regime opponents are also reported.

The phenomenon of corpses is also reported in this bulletin.

Intimidation organized by CNDD-FDD Imbonerakure youth in complicity with administration officials are a source of threats to any person nonmember of the ruling party. Demonstrations headed by high ranked officials of the country are also reported.

Considering the continuously serious situation of human rights situation in Burundi, Iteka League recommends the government of Burundi the following:

- To dismantle and disarm the Imbonerakure militia which spread terror in the country and which has replaced the administration and security corps;
- To enforce the CCP for cases of arrests currently being committed dealt with by persons who are not competent to do so;
- To punish policemen, soldiers, Imbonerakure League youth and administrative agents involved in human rights violations and intimidation of the population;
- To cooperate fully with ICC to punish the perpetrators of crimes committed in Burundi