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Weekly bulletin « ITEKA N'IJAMBO » n° 90 of the Burundian League of Human Rights "ITEKA"

Week from 18-24 December 2017



In memory of Madam Marie Claudette Kwizera, Treasurer of Iteka, reported missing since December 10, 2015. From December 2015 to 24 December 2017, Iteka has documented at least 474 cases of enforced disappearances.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CNDD-FDD : *National Council for the Defense of Democracy*

ECOFO : *Fundamental School/Ecole Fondamentale*

FIDA : *International Fund for Agricultural Development*

FNL : *National Liberation Front*

PJ : *Judicial Police*

PRODEFI : *Commodities Development Programme*

SIP : *Real Estate Corporation*

SNR : *National Intelligence Service*

0. INTRODUCTION

Allegations and violations of human rights were recorded during this reporting period: at least 3 reported missing, 1 tortured and 2 arbitrarily arrested.

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

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

The phenomenon of mob justice is reported in different parts of the country.

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 linked to the referendum vote for the change of the constitution is reported in this bulletin

I. ALLEGATIONS OF VIOLATIONS AND VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS

I.1. PERSONS ABDUCTED AND REPORTED MISSING

A person abducted in Nyarusange commune, Gitega province

On 21 December 2017, about 1:00 pm, on Nyamazi hill, Nyarusange commune, Gitega province, Jérôme Irampaye, director of ECOFO Nyamazi was abducted from his home by unidentified persons. According to our sources on site, the kidnappers were in a Prado jeep with tinted windows and took him to an unknown destination.

A person abducted in Mugongo-Manga commune, Bujumbura rural province

On December 18, 2017, around 7:00 pm, at a bar located in Rwibaga center, on Rwibaga hill, Jenda zone, Mugongo-Manga commune, Bujumbura rural province, Félicien Ndiokubwayo, FNL member of Agathon Rwasa's wing, Rutambiro hill, Kankima zone, Mugongo-Manga commune was abducted by SNR agents. According to sources on site, Félicien Ndiokubwayo was taken into a car and driven to an unknown place.

A person abducted in Mukike commune, Bujumbura rural province

On December 22, 2017, on Mutobo hill, Rukina zone, Mukike commune, Bujumbura Rural province, Déo Gahungu was abducted by Major Marius Gahomera alias Gakoryo, commander of the 221 Ruyigi Battalion operating in Bujumbura Rural province. According to sources on site, Deo Gahungu was tortured by this commander before being abducted.

I.2. PERSONS TORTURED BY SNR AGENTS, ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS AND/OR IMBONERAKURE

A person tortured in Gatara commune, Kayanza province

On December 19, 2017, at around 2:00 pm, on Mbirizi hill in Gatara commune, Kayanza province, Bonaventure Ahishakiye, FNL member of Agathon Rwasa's wing and from Nyarurambi hill in the same commune, was arrested by SNR agents. He was accused of having sensitized FNL members of Agathon Rwasa's wing in Muhanga commune to vote "NO" in the referendum for the revision of the Constitution. He was released the same day at about 9:00 pm, in critical condition, after being beaten up.

Three people tortured in Kiremba commune, Ngozi province

On 19 December 2017, around 9:00 pm, on Nyamarobe hill, Kiremba commune, Ngozi province, three FNL members of Agathon Rwasa's wing, including Jean Bosco Hakizimana, Constantin Minani and Marc Bagenzi, were tortured by Imbonerakure in complicity with CNDD-FDD representative in this commune, Pascal Sebigo. According to sources on site, they were arrested by the Imbonerakure of CNDD-FDD, who then alerted this representative. At the arrival of the latter, they tortured them, forcing them to join CNDD-FDD.

I.3. PERSONS ARRESTED BY IMBONERAKURE AND / OR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS

A person arrested in Kirundo commune and province

Information received by Iteka league on December 19, 2017 indicates that on December 17, 2017, on Yaranda hill, commune and Kirundo province, Nestor Rwasa was arrested by Imbonerakure led by Mvuyekure and Ferdinand Nduwimana , Yaranda hill head, as well as Kirundo rural zone head, Eric Ndayisaba. According to sources on site, the latter beat him up before taking him to Kirundo commune police cell. The same sources indicate that the victim would be accused of having sent a letter to the governor of that province asking him to do justice to Cohoha Lake riverside population who was robbed of his own land.

In this correspondence of November 22, 2017, Nestor Rwasa asked the governor to reinstate the rights of those living near Cohoha Lake whose lands were plundered by the leaders of an association called "New Development Vision". The latter, according to the same correspondence, had the mission of protecting Cohoha Lake, which resulted in the plundering of land from the lake riverside population for the benefit of other persons, including the members of this association through bribes.

A person arrested in Kirundo commune and province

On December 22, 2017, a 65-year-old named Gahiga, CNDD-FDD party member, from Gikuyo hill, commune and Kirundo province was arrested by Imbonerakure from this hill, commune and Kirundo province and led him to PJ Kirundo. According to sources on site, he was accused of having advised his sons and their companions, all Imbonerakure, not to fall into President Nkurunziza's trap and to vote "NO" for the referendum.

II. INTIMIDATION BY ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS

Intimidation in Kirundo commune and province

On December 22, 2017, at Kanyinya High School, Minister of Justice Aimee Laurentine Kanyana organized a meeting for all officials and traders of Kirundo province with the purpose of promoting the referendum on the change of the constitution. According to sources on site, she threatened the people who will oppose this referendum instead of explaining its contents. The minister told the participants that whoever will dare opposing and vote "NO" in the referendum will be punished. No participants dared asking questions until the end of the meeting.

III. OTHER FACTS REPORTED

A grenade launched in Gitega commune and province

On December 22, 2017, on Nyakibingo hill, Gitega commune and province, a grenade was thrown at Jean de Dieu Hatungimana's home, former Director General of SIP without causing any damage. People have been arrested by the police, including Pie Nzirubusa, for investigative reasons.

Three people injured in Mugina commune, Cibitoke province

On the night of 18 to 19 December 2017, at Buseruko hill, Mugina commune, Cibitoke province, Jerome Sinumvayaha's home, a farmer and CNDD-FDD party member was attacked by unidentified gunmen. According to local sources, these people shot and launched a grenade. His wife Emilienne Ntacoripfa, his child and himself were seriously injured. They were taken to Mabayi Hospital for treatment. The same sources add that this couple is accused of sorcery because they were on a list of 36 sorcerers who were to be killed by the end of 2017.

Forced contribution in Musongati Commune, Rutana province

On December 18, 2017, on Ngoma hill and zone, Musongati commune, Rutana province, around 7:00 pm, Audace was forced to give 50,000 Bif by Lazare Nifasha, head of Ngoma zone in collaboration with Ngoma police post head, accused of not contributing to the construction of a CNDD-FDD party provincial office in Rutana.

Leaflets found in Buhiga commune, Karusi province

On the 19th of December 2017, at around 6:00 am, on Rweya hill, Buhiga zone and commune, Karusi province, leaflets were found, intimidating 5 members of Ntirandekura's family, including Mugisha, who is currently in prison for not having attended those who were in danger. Ntirandekura had murdered 6 people on 9 October 2017 before committing suicide. Those who wrote these leaflets mentioned that for revenge, they will exterminate Ntirandekura's family, which they describe as cruel.

Cows killed and mutilated in Gashikanwa and Ngozi communes, Ngozi province

On December 24, 2017, cow bodies were found in Gashikanwa and Ngozi communes of Ngozi province. On-site sources indicate that these cows were donated by IFAD's PRODEFI project to the population. These sources add that the alleged perpetrators are Imbonerakure and the cows killed are those given to non-CNDD-FDD members.

Two repatriates mistreated in Nyabikere commune, Karusi province

On 18 December 2017, on Maramvya II hill, Maramvya zone, Nyabikere commune, two policemen from Maramvya post stole stuffs of two men, including Nicodeme, all from Ruhuma hill, Rugwiza zone, Nyabikere commune, Karusi province, accusing them of belonging to armed groups. According to sources on site, these two men came from Tanzania.

A person injured in Muyinga commune and province

On the night of 17-18 December, 2017, on Sanzwe hill, Munagano zone in Muyinga commune and province, a girl named Devote was wounded by spear by a group of three unidentified people, in an attack on her family home. Three cows in the barn were seriously injured. Tabaro Laban, head of the household was absent during the attack. A few days ago, a leaflet threatening him to death had been picked at his home. He was accused of being a sorcerer. Three alleged perpetrators were arrested.

Overcrowding at Rumonge police station cell

Information received by Iteka league on 19 December 2017 indicates that two cells in Rumonge police cell for men have a total of 55 inmates while the capacity of each cell is 10.

On-site sources indicate that the files of some detainees are still in investigation, others before the public prosecutor's office in Rumonge.

Some of these inmates have just spent two weeks or even a month without appearing. They denounce this illegal detention.

IV. CONCLUSION

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.

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

Intimidation by the government officials from CNDD-FDD is a source of threats against any person against the referendum.