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Weekly bulletin « ITEKA N'IJAMBO » n° 109 of the Burundian League of Human Rights "ITEKA"

Week from 30 April – 6 may 2018



In memory of Madam Marie Claudette Kwizera, Treasurer of Iteka, reported missing since December 10, 2015. From December 2015 to 6 April 2018, Iteka has documented at least 486 cases of enforced disappearances.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

- BBC** : *British Broadcasting Corporation*
- CCIB FM+** : *Radio of Burundi Chamber of Commerce and Industry*
- CDS** : *Health Center*
- CNDD-FDD** : *National Council for the Defense of Democracy*
- CNI** : *National identity Card*
- ECOFO** : *Fundamental School*
- FNL** : *National Liberation Front*
- SNR** : *National Intelligence Service*
- UPD** : *Union for Peace and Democracy*
- VBG** : *Gender Based Violence*
- VOA** : *Voice of America*

0. INTRODUCTION

During the period covered by this bulletin, allegations of violations and human rights violations were recorded: at least 6 people killed, including 1 body found, 9 tortured, 58 arbitrarily arrested and 1 victim of gender-based violence.

A wave of arrests based on verification of household notebooks has become a means of ransoming the population by police officers. Arrests linked to participation in the campaign for the constitutional referendum have been widely observed in different provinces of the country.

Acts of intimidation and hate speech related to the constitutional referendum are reported in this bulletin.

Some are singled out as the perpetrators of most of these human rights violations.

The Ligue Iteka protests against the impunity of the crimes enjoyed by youth members of the Imbonerakure militia affiliated to CNDD-FDD ruling party, police officers, soldiers, SNR agents and administration agents involved in various violations under the complicity of public authorities.

I. ALLEGATIONS OF VIOLATIONS AND VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS

I.1. ALLEGATIONS OF VIOLATIONS OF THE RIGHT TO LIFE

I.1.1. PEOPLE KILLED BY IMBONERAKURE

One person killed and two other wounded in Giheta commune, Gitega province

On May 3, 2018, in Giheta commune, Gitega province, Ménard Nduwabike, FNL member of Agathon Rwasa's wing, died of his injuries at Kibimba hospital. According to sources on site, he was beaten up on the evening of April 27, 2018 by Imbonerakure of Giheta commune patrolling at night. Two other people were wounded in the same night. According to these same sources, these Imbonerakure have set a curfew at 10:00 pm and anyone not at their camp is fined 20,000 Bif.

A person killed in Giheta commune, Gitega province

On May 2, 2017, around 10:00 pm, on Kaguhu hill, Giheta commune, Gitega province, Louis Rudomo, watchman at Bubu market in Kibimba was beaten by Imbonerakure including Libere working at Kibimba hospital, Nzeyimana and François patrolling at night in Bubu area. He died the next day at Kibimba hospital. According to local sources, Libere ran away and the provincial police commissioner arrested Nzeyimana and François.

A person killed in Mabanda commune, Makamba province

Information received on April 30, 2018 indicates that on April 27, 2018, Fabien Ngendero was killed with machetes by Imbonerakure on Gikombe hill, Mabanda commune, Makamba province.

According to local sources, the victim was accused of sorcery and spent two weeks at Mabanda communal police station fearing for his safety. Five Imborekure were arrested for investigation.

1.2. PEOPLE ABDUCTED THEN REPORTED MISSING

A person abducted then found in Buyenzi urban zone, Bujumbura city

Moustafa Madebari, member of UPD-ZIGAMIBANGA party, abducted on April 27, 2018 by unidentified men in Bujumbura city was found on April 30, 2018. Sources on site say he was jailed in one of SNR cells.

1.3. PERSONS TORTURED BY IMBONERAKURE

Four people tortured in Rango commune, Kayanza province

On May 2, 2018, in Rango province Kayanza commune, FNL members of Agathon Rwasa's wing including Remy Ndayitwayeko from Gikomero hill, Manasse Karenzo from Musagara hill, André Bizimana from Nyabigoyi hill and Sylodie Minani from Rango hill were beaten up by Imbonerakure including Evariste, Libere and Felicien commanded by their leader Aimable. According to local sources, these FNL party members return from Ngozi meeting of Amizero y'Abarundi coalition.

A person tortured in Muhuta commune, Rumonge province

On 30 April 2018, a soldier named Nakurunziza was beaten up by Imbonerakure from Rutongo zone, Muhuta commune, Rumonge province, including Gaspard. Sources on site indicate that this soldier failed to pay an invoice of 200 Bif of his shopping and was disarmed by these Imbonerakure and then beaten up. The victim alerted his colleagues who came to his rescue, adds the same sources.

A person tortured in Bugabira commune, Kirundo province

Information received by Ligue Iteka on 1 May 2018, dated 29 April 2018, Jean Claude Nkunzimana, from Nyamabuye hill, Bugabira commune, Kirundo province, seller of donuts and tea was beaten up by Imbonerakure of this hill commanded by their leader Emmanuel Nsaguye. According to sources on site, he refused these Imbonerakure consume his items for free. According to the same sources, after complaining to the hill head, Emmanuel Ngendanzi, the latter said that Imbonerakure have right to consume anything for free for their peacekeeping role.

Three people tortured in Mukike commune, Bujumbura rural province

On 2 May 2018, around 4:00 pm, Jean Bosco Nkunzimana, Fabien Murezi, Innocent Gahama, from Mutobo hill, Rukina zone, Mukike commune, Bujumbura rural province, all Amizero y'Abarundi coalition members were arrested and tortured by Imbonerakure in complicity with police officers from Rukina police station. They were accused of owning videos of their Amizero y'Abarundi coalition meeting held in Ngozi province. They were jailed at Rukina police station.

1.4. PERSONS ARRESTED BY POLICE, IMBONERAKURE AND SNR AGENTS

Fourteen people arrested in Nyakabiga urban zone, Bujumbura City

On May 3, 2018, police officers from Nyakabiga police station carried out a search of household to control notebooks on 4-6 avenues of quarter II in this zone. Fourteen people were arrested and taken to the zone office for various irregularities after their notebooks and identities were removed. Along the way, three each gave 2000 Bif to a police officer who escorted them and were released.

Twenty-two people arrested in Ntahangwa commune, Bujumbura City

On May 2, 2018, policemen from Cibitoke urban zone post, Ntahangwa commune, Bujumbura city, as well as soldiers carried out a search to control household notebooks on the dorsal avenues until the 5th Avenue (# 1 to 60) of quarter I in this zone. Twenty-two people were arrested and taken to the zone office for irregularities after their notebooks and CNIs were removed. On the way, 16 gave ransoms to the escorting police, the amounts of which were not revealed and were released. Six others were held in the same zone cell.

Five people arrested in Kirundo province

On May 6, 2018, five Imbonerakure, including Mbavu, a Muslim from Higirow hill, head of Imbonerakure of Gisenyi zone, were arrested by SNR. According to local sources, they were accused of returning from Tanzania on May 2, 2018 to meet Hussein Radjabu. They were jailed in SNR cell in Kirundo.

Two people arrested in Bubanza commune and province

On May 4, 2018, around 3:00 pm, in Bubanza downtown, Bubanza commune and province, Muyubira and Nzisabira, FNL members of Agathon Rwaswa' wing were arrested by 2 Imbonerakure in collaboration with hill elected officials including Francois Nizigiyimana and 2 police officers. According to our sources on site, they are accused of having torn the sheet of a propaganda card of CNDD-FDD "EGO". The victims are jailed in Bubanza province police station cell.

Seven people arrested in Rugombo commune, Cibitoke province

On May 3, 2018, on Rugeregere hill, Rugombo commune, Cibitoke province, seven members of Amizero y'Abarundi coalition were arrested by young Imbonerakure. These members had left Ngozi province for a meeting of this coalition. According to our sources, they were released directly after a call from an authority the victims did not recognize.

A person arrested in Buhiga commune, Karuzi province

On May 3, 2018, on Buhiga hill, zone and commune, Karuzi province, Riyazimana was arrested and taken to Buhiga zone cell by the communal police commissioner named Gilbert. According to sources on site, he accused him of having crossed the road during the passage of CNDD-FDD authorities coming in the opening festivities of referendum propaganda on Buhiga hill.

A person arrested in Mwakiro commune, Muyinga province

On May 2, 2018, Denis Bukuru, Amizero y'Abarundi coalition member, teacher at ECOFO Kabingo, located in Mwakiro zone and commune, Muyinga province, was arrested by police and was taken to Muyinga police station. According to sources on site, he has been accused of illegal possession of weapons and other military objects. Neighbors as well as members of his family reject these allegations, arguing that it would be a fabrication linked to political reason.

Five people arrested in Murwi commune, Cibitoke province

On the evening of May 3, 2018, Claude Niyonzima, André Hafashimana, Bosco Ngendakumana, Bosco Nindangira and Fabien Nzobonimpa, all FNL members of Agathon Rwasa's wing, were arrested by Imbonerakure from Buhindo zone, Murwi commune, Cibitoke province. According to sources on site, they were arrested at their homes, accused of having participated, on May 2, 2018, in Ngozi, in a campaign to vote for "NO" at the next constitutional referendum. They are jailed in Murwi commune cell, according to the same sources.

A person arrested in Kanyosha commune, Bujumbura rural province

On May 3, 2018, in Ruziba zone, Kanyosha commune, Bujumbura rural province, Félicien Ntirandekura, FNL party activist, native of Kabezi commune, was arrested by Imbonerakure and boarded by a vehicle with tinted windows in which was a SNR agent named Joe Dassin. According to local sources, the kidnappers included an Imbonerakure named Salvator and the SNR head in Bujumbura rural province. According to the same sources, these Imbonerakure first seized Felicien Ntirandekura's phone, searched his house and left with the victim. Taken first to an unknown location, Felicien Ntirandekura was released on the evening of May 5, 2018.

1.5. GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

A girl raped in Bubanza commune and province

On May 2, 2018, at around 6:00 am on Shari-Giko hill, Bubanza commune and province, 52-year-old Ngendabanyikwa alias Mufaransi, CNDD-FDD party member, raped a girl named AN, 6 years old. Before committing the crime, the author was alone at home and he saw the child passing close to his home and he called her in his house saying he has a message to his parents. The author took off after collaborating with zone head Oscar Gasereka and young Imbonerakure from this locality. The victim is being treated at Bubanza I CDS (Caritas Burundi Center Branch) and medical tests indicate that the girl was raped and is seriously injured in sex.

II. VIOLATION OF THE RIGHT OF ACCESS TO JUSTICE

Non-enforcement of judgment in Nyabikere commune, Karuzi province

On May 2, 2018, on Ruhuma hill, Rugwiza zone, Nyabikere commune, Karuzi province, the judges named Leonidas, Pie, Marie and Gertrude, of Nyabikere court of residence who had come to enforce a property delimitation judgment in conflict between the families Ndimurukundo, Munzara, Nyedetse, Barakambikiye and Macumi, refused to enforce the judgment. According to sources on site, these judges demanded a sum of money from the families concerned for this activity and these families could not find it. The judges returned to the office without doing the work.

III. OTHER FACTS REPORTED

Media suspended two weeks before the referendum

On May 4, 2018, in a press release number 004/CNC/KR, the CNC decided to suspend BBC and VOA radios for six months from May 7, 2018 while RFI, Isanganiro and CCIB FM⁺ were "warned." The "Announcements and advertisements" section of "Le Renouveau du Burundi" newspaper has been suspended for a 3-month period from 7 April 2018.

IV. SECURITY FACTS

Two people killed in Gisuru commune, Ruyigi province

On May 2, 2018, at around 8:00 pm, on Kabuyenge hill, Gisuru commune, Ruyigi province, criminals behind Innocent Kayobera's kiosk, threw a grenade followed by Kalashnikov gunfire and 5 people were seriously injured including Kayobera. According to local sources, the wounded were transported to Gisuru hospital but two people, Sévérin Nyabenda and Eric Niyonkuru, died in the hospital. According to the same sources, Jean Kanani, an FDN deserter, was arrested by police on May 3, 2018 for investigation.

A body found in Rusaka commune, Mwaro province

Information received on May 6, 2018 indicates that a body of Gregoire Mpitabavuma of Nkundusi hill, Rusaka commune, Mwaro province was found in Kayokwe River on April 21, 2018 5 days after he was disappeared. Kayokwe commune administrator who confirmed the facts indicating that the victim had just spent two weeks on Musama hill and that when he returned home, he passed in Kayokwe River where he was drowned. His family went to see his colleagues to ask why theirs did not come back for a long time and together they went to notify the administrator. After the search the body was found in the river.

A grenade found in a bar in Gatara commune, Kayanza province

On May 1, 2018, on Kibenga hill, Gatara commune, Kayanza province, a detonated grenade was found in the bar of a man named Eric, representing Imbonerakure in the same commune. The police arrived on the scene before it exploded.

V. ACTS OF INTIMIDATION

Hate speech in Bugendana commune, Gitega province

On May 2, 2018, the 1st day of CNDD-FDD party campaign for "YES" in the constitutional referendum elections, in Bugendana commune, Gitega province, Evariste Ndayishimiye, CNDD-FDD party Secretary General told the crowd saying: *"Time is over for the Belgians, the Germans, and other settlers who want to stay here in Burundi. Make sure, we have the power, we will keep it and we are ready to fight the troublemakers wherever they come from. Our president is a permanent visionary. Voting for "YES" is getting rid of the disdain of foreigners, it is to put an end to the regimes of the past and agreements that have no more value "*,

In his speech, President Pierre Nkurunziza said: *"Do not worry, call the militants to vote for 'YES' to the constitutional referendum, let everyone vote according to the instructions he has received. Whoever will block the elections will deal with God"*. The security of the launch ceremonies was particularly ensured by the young Imbonerakure and supported by the police.

Amizero y'Abarundi members coalition meeting banned in Mwaro province

On May 6, 2018, Amizero y'Abarundi coalition members, including the leader of Agathon Rwasa's FNL wing in the commune, went to Rusaka commune, Mwaro province to raise awareness of the population to vote for "NO" and the police prevented them from delivering the speech of the occasion. It prevented the population to access to Rusaka stadium on the order of the commune administrator, Bernardine Nduwimana, CNDD-FDD party member who was even present there.

Identification of Amizero y'Abarundi members in Kirundo province

On May 3, 2018, identifications of Amizero members traveling to Kirundo to meet Agathon Rwasa at Bushaza Stadium were being conducted by Imbonerakure and hill heads across the province. The latter were on the roads to Kirundo province capital city and noted the names of anyone suspected of attending the Amizero y'Abarundi coalition meeting.

Residents of Muhuta commune, Rumonge province forced to participate in CNDD-FDD meeting

On May 4, 2018, residents of Muhuta commune, Rumonge province were forced by police officers to participate in a CNDD-FDD party referendum meeting. According to sources on site, these police mobilized them to listen to the speech of the ruling party representatives who called them to vote for "YES" for the revision of the constitution. Women selling fruit to passengers on transport buses have been banned from carrying out their activities and have been forced to participate in the "YES" campaign.

Intimidation in Buhiga commune, Karuzi province

On May 3, 2018, since 5:00 am, on Buhiga hill, zone and commune, more than 300 Imbonerakure of some Karuzi province communes crossed all the streets of Buhiga bypassing several times the central market chanting slogans intimidating opponents. According to sources on site, they said that all opponents will be gnawed by the eagle that is in power, that Nkurunziza has taken power and will never leave it, that those who are against the referendum for the new constitution must die or exile like Niyombare and his friends. According to the same sources, the Imbonerakure from Gitaramuka commune were ahead, led by Angélique Mukeshimana, director of ECOFO Ruhata, and the race started at 5:00 am and finished at 10:00 am. It was during the campaign organized by CNDD-FDD party for the opening of the referendum propaganda. The ceremonies were enhanced by Pascal Nyabenda, Speaker of the National Assembly and Joseph Butore, 2nd Vice President of the Republic of Burundi.

VI. CONCLUSION

Violations of human rights and allegations of violations following the deterioration of the political context since the beginning of the challenge of the 3rd term of President Pierre Nkurunziza continue to be recorded in various parts of the country.

Cases of killings, torture, arbitrary and illegal arrests targeted of opponents and alleged opponents to CNDD-FDD party regime are reported.

Intimidation linked to the constitutional referendum is a source of threats to the population.

With the launching of the constitutional referendum campaign, the bulletin reports cases of human rights violations linked the participation of this campaign.