



LIGUE BURUNDAISE DES DROITS DE L'HOMME

"ITEKA" association sans but lucratif

Agréée par l'ordonnance ministérielle n°530/0273 du 10 novembre 1994 revoyant l'ordonnance 550/029 du 6 février 1991

Membre affilié de la Fédération Internationale des Ligues des Droits de l'Homme (F.I.D.H)

LBDH/098/2019

Kampala, 4th april 2019

THE PRE-ELECTORAL PERIOD IS NOT SYNONYMOUS WITH PEACE AND STABILITY IN BURUNDI

Since 25 April 2015, Burundi has experienced an unprecedented crisis triggered by the decision of President Pierre Nkurunziza to seek a third term unconstitutional and in violation of the Arusha Agreement. The following day, protests against this term began. A brutal repression against all forms of real or presumed political opposition, is observed to this day. Opposition political parties and civil society leaders have been forced into exile, civil society organizations have been banned and independent media destroyed and suspended. This repression has resulted into serious crimes of international law such as extrajudicial executions, targeted killings, enforced disappearances and acts of torture. Other forms of inhuman and/or degrading ill-treatment as well as arbitrary arrests and unjust imprisonment have been recorded.

Since the crisis in Burundi from April 2015 to March 31, 2019, Ligue Iteka has recorded 1739 cases of people killed, 526 reported missing, 192 victims of GBV, 771 tortured and 9844 arbitrarily arrested.

The crisis in Burundi has caused a massive flow of refugees. Reports from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees report nearly 400,000 refugees in countries bordering Burundi and the subregion.

The post-election period of 2015 was characterized by the radicalization of the Burundi regime by the refusal to cooperate with the ICC and the United Nations investigators, the withdrawal of the Rome Statute and the boycott of the inter-Burundian dialogue. Against the opinions of different partners of Burundi, the government organized a referendum for the change of the Constitution which was promulgated on 7 June 2018.

While Ligue Iteka expected the East African Community to focus its efforts on advancing the standby negotiations, initiated by the East African Community and chaired by Ugandan President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni with the facilitation of the former Tanzanian President Benjamin Mkapa, the Tanzanian Government keeps hounding Burundian refugees while the Ugandan Government has just announced the return of Burundian refugees to their country.

This is happening as reports from civil society organizations and other institutions report the deterioration of the human rights situation in Burundi.

For the past two quarters alone, the Government has demonstrated its authoritarian nature, resulting in the zeroing of independent observation and freedom of expression: 130 international NGOs working in Burundi were suspended on 27 September 2018 for three months by the National Security Council of Burundi; the Government of Burundi



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demanded the closure of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in Burundi on 5 December 2018; the National Council of Communication announced the renewal of the suspension of the VOA radio while the BBC radio was withdrawn the authorization of exploitation on the territory of Burundi of March 29, 2019.

Thus, for the last two quarters, Ligue Iteka has already documented 250 people killed including 118 bodies found, 43 abducted and/or reported missing, 37 victims of GBV, 134 tortured and 362 arbitrarily arrested.

Ligue Iteka deplores the fact that women and children who should benefit from special protection have not been spared. In fact, for the last two quarters, at least 39 women and 15 minors were killed, 2 women and 1 minor reported missing, 14 women and 2 minors tortured, as well as 20 women and 13 minors arrested.

Despite this situation, the Government of Burundi is already preparing for the 2020 elections and forced contributions are imposed on all citizens of voting age, including students.

Faced with this situation of serious violations of human rights in Burundi, Ligue Iteka recommends:

- the Government of Burundi to work for the restoration of peace in the country;
- the technical and financial partners to use their influence to force the Government of Burundi to resume negotiations with its antagonists;
- the African Union and the United Nations to be fully involved in the resumption of negotiations;
- the UNHCR to fully play its role of safeguarding the rights and well-being of refugees;
- the East African Community to ensure compliance with the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees;
- Uganda and Tanzania to abandon their forced repatriation programs for refugees;
- national and international organizations to continue to inform the international community on the human rights situation in Burundi;
- the population to remain in solidarity and not to give in to the requests and divisive teachings inciting hatred and violence.

Done in Kampala, 4th april 2019

Anschaire NIKOYAGIZE

President of Ligue Iteka

