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Weekly bulletin « ITEKA N'IJAMBO » n°72 of the Burundian League of Human Rights "ITEKA"

Week from 14-20 August 2017



In memory of Madame Marie Claudette Kwizera, Treasurer of Iteka, reported missing since December 10, 2015. From December 2015 to 20 August 2017, Iteka has documented at least 442 cases of enforced disappearances.

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ACRONYM AND ABBREVIATIONS

API: *Support for the Protection of Institutions*

BAE: *Anti-Riot Brigade*

CDS: *Health Center*

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

FAB: *Burundi Armed Forces*

FNL: *National Liberation Front*

MSD: *Movement for Solidarity and Democracy*

RN : *National Road*

SNR: *National Intelligence Service*

0. INTRODUCTION

Allegations and violations of human rights were recorded during this reporting period: at least 10 persons killed including 7 corpses, 2 reported missing, 7 tortured and 184 arbitrarily arrested.

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

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

Members of the opposition parties, namely those of the FNL wing of Agathon Rwasa and those of MSD were a privileged target of the repression organized by President Pierre Nkurunziza's regime.

Ex-FAB soldiers retired or in active service were also victims of the repression of CNDD-FDD regime.

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.

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

1. ALLEGATIONS OF VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS

1.1. ALLEGATIONS OF VIOLATIONS OF RIGHT TO LIFE

1.1.1. PERSONS KILLED IN ARMED ATTACKS

Three persons killed and twenty-seven injured in Buyenzi urban zone, Bujumbura City

On 17 August 2017, around 8:00 pm, Fidele, cloth street vendor at Ruvumera market and native from Rushemeza hill, Rutovu commune, Bururi province, three persons were killed and twenty-nine were injured in a grenade attack at banana beer bars on the 15th Avenue No 21 and No 29. According to police sources, 12 people were injured on the 15th Avenue No 21 and 17th avenue No 29. Two among the injured succumbed later to their wounds including Muhwego former teacher at Bujumbura Athennee, native from Muzima hill, commune and Bururi province and Cunike money exchanger at the 7th avenue in Buyenzi urban zone, Bujubura city.

1.1.2. CORPSES FOUND IN BUSH AND/OR RIVER

A corpse found in Butihinda commune, Muyinga province

On August 14, 2017, on Gahahe hill, Butihinda commune, Muyinga province, a body of an old woman Immaculée Misago, aged 70, was discovered strangled in her house. The same sources add that the victim had spent the evening in a bar of the area. Local administrative officials confirm this information and indicate that investigations have already started.

A corpse found in Karusi province

On 16 August 2017, a corpse of Elie Kwizera was found in Ndurumu River separating Buhiga and Bugenyuzi communes in Karusi province. The body was packed in a mosquito net, feet and hands tied with a rope. According to sources on site, Elie Kwizera lived in Yoba-Magarama quarter in Gitega urban center. The same sources add he was a CNDD-FDD Imbonerakure youth movement member. Very active in Imbonerakure movement, he was reported missing two weeks ago after a meeting at the party office in Gitega.

A corpse found in Ruyigi province

On August 14, 2017, on Ruharo hill in Nyabitsinda commune, Ruyigi province, a 70-year-old woman Anesie Bucumi was found dead suspended on a rope in her house. According to site sources, her body had wounds, which suggested she may have been killed. The cause of this murder is the land issue, sources said. She had won her case in a land dispute with Hélène Nyandwi. On 11 August 2017, Nyabitsinda court granted him the property which was the subject of the dispute. The alleged perpetrators, including Nyarusage, the deceased's granddaughter and another man, were jailed in Nyabitsinda commune cell, according to the same sources.

A corpse found in Bururi province

As of 18 August 2017 in morning, an unidentified body of a 30-year-old woman with tied arms was discovered in Jiji River between Bururi and Songa communes, sources said. According to the province police commissioner, the body was not identified and was taken to Bururi hospital morgue.

Three bodies found in Ruhwa River, Rugombo Commune, Cibitoke Province

As of August 17, 2017, three pierced bodies were found in Ruhwa River, close to customs post between Burundi and Rwanda, on Rukana hill, Rugombo commune, Cibitoke Province. According to our sources, the bodies still floated on the river on the evening of August 18, 2017. The origin of these bodies remains unknown and the same sources say they heard vehicles at night in this area. In Cibitoke province, in Buganda commune, in Gasenyi, Joseph Mathias Niyonzima alias Kazungu cited in many killings make several shuttles during these days of discoveries of these bodies in this province, according to the same sources.

1.2 PERSONS ABDUCTED AND REPORTED MISSING BY IMBONERAKURE AND SOLDIERS

One person arrested and then reported missing in Kamenge urban zone , Bujumbura City

On 17 August 2017, at about 4:00 pm, Fiston Nsengiyumva, aged 38, living in Bwiza urban zone, Muha commune, Bujumbura city, was arrested by an Imbonerakure known as Ramazani near Iwabo w'Abantu bar in Kamenge, Ntahangwa commune, Bujumbura City. According to sources on site, Fiston was from Kenya via Rwanda. The same sources add that Fiston was handed over to a soldier

named Rickman attached to a position near "Iwabo n'abantu" bar before being taken to an unknown destination. His family indicates that the place of detention of Fiston Nsengiyumva is still unknown.

A person reported missing in Gitega commune and province

Parfait, living in Kumasanganzira, commune and province Gitega has been reported missing for two weeks. According to information from Gitega, he was with Elie Kwizera found dead packed in a mosquito net in Ndurumu River separating Buhiga and Bugenyuzi communes in Karusi province on 16 August 2017. His family says it did not have news of him anymore.

1.3. PERSONS TORTURED BY IMBONERAKURE, SNR AGENTS AND POLICEMEN

A person tortured in Rango commune, Kayanza province

As of August 17, 2017, pm Jules Bikorimana, MSD member, was beaten up on Rubungu hill, Rango commune, Kayanza province, around 8:00 attached to an avocado by Imbonerakure for not joining CNDD-FDD party. Barnabe Nahimana and Symphorien alias Bamba are among the Imbonerakure who beat him.

One person tortured in Gisozi commune, Mwaro province

Information dated 20 August 2017 indicates that as of 13 August 2017, around 9:00 pm, on Musimbwe hill, Nyakararo zone, Gisozi commune in Mwaro province, Ntunzwenimana Pontien, soldier on leave was clubbed on the head by Musimbwe hill head Séverin Hajayandi. According to sources on site, Potien and Severin both came from a bar in Kiyange 1 km from this hill. Arrived halfway, near a potato field, Pontien was clubbed on the head by the hill chairman. The victim was admitted to CDS Nyakararo.

One person tortured in Ntega commune, Kirundo province

Information dated August 20, 2017 indicates that Mushengezi aged 39, a Hutu, member of FNL of Agathon Rwasa's wing, from Carubambo hill Mugendo zone, Ntega commune was arrested, beaten up and tied by Toyi P. Claver and Imbonerakure of the area on the night of 23 to 24 July 2017 in Mariza, Mugendo zone, Ntega commune, Kirundo province. Mushengezi was obliged to pay an amount of 230,000 Bif to be released and he was forced to sell his cow as he did not have this cash available.

Two persons tortured in Rutegama commune, Muramvya province

On 14 August 2017, in Rutegama commune, Muramvya province, two brothers Georges and Josias were beaten up by the SNR official in Rutegama, known as Anicet. He accused Josias of returning from Kenya. They are both FNL members of Agathon Rwasa's wing.

A person tortured in Mabanda commune, Makamba province

On the night of 14 August 2017, in Mabanda commune, Makamba province, three Imbonerakure on patrols headed by Kwizera, severely beat up Jean Bosco Muhimpundu before robbing everything he

possessed. A cell phone and an amount of 25,000 Bif were stolen from him before throwing him in a gutter, roped.

One person tortured in Vugizo commune, Makamba province

As of August 14, 2017, Minani was beaten up and severely wounded by young Imbonerakure headed by Ndayitwayeko on Rurambira hill, Gishiha zone, Vugizo commune, Makamba province. According to sources on site, he was accused of attempting to steal.

I.4. PERSONS ARRESTED BY IMBONERAKURE, SNR AGENTS, POLICEMEN AND/OR SOLDIERS

Nine eight people arrested at Mutanga campus, Bujumbura City

As of 19 August 2017, ninety eight persons were arrested and taken to Bujumbura City police station by API and BAE police together with the Imbonerakure during a search at Mutanga Campus of the University of Burundi. According to sources on site, they came without a warrant and smashed the doors of the rooms closed for the search. Police spokesman Pierre Nkurikiye said the arrested, seventy eight were finalist students, fifteen attended other universities, four were visitors and one student had hemp. According to our sources, 40 were released after paying fine of 15,000 Bif each, paid to Bujumbura capital city account.

Fifty people arrested in Kirundo province

On 18 August 2017, a Platinum agency bus from Uganda was stopped in Kirundo after crossing Gasenyi-Nemba border by SNR agents and 50 passengers are all held in Kirundo. The reason for their arrest remains unknown.

Thirty-five people arrested in Ruhororo commune, Ngozi province

As of 16 August 2017, thirty-five persons, including 28 displaced persons from Ruhororo site were arrested and taken to Ngozi province police cell by police officers from Ruhororo commune. Most of them over the age of 50 were accused of wanting to join armed groups. On the same day, policemen in collaboration with young Imbonerakure from Cagura and Gitaramuka hills in Ruhororo commune of Ngozi province blocked the road to a probox vehicle. Passengers in this vehicle were beaten up before being robbed of all their belongings and then taken to the cell with those arrested from Ruhororo site. All these persons were released on 19 August 2017 on payment of 10 000 Bif each and those who transported them paid 25 000 Bif each.

II. INTIMIDATION BY CNDD-FDD PARTY MEMBERS

Night patrols at Mutanga campus

Imbonerakure students of the University of Burundi, Mutanga Campus beat and mistreat their colleagues not members of CNDD -FDD party. Campus sources say there is a climate of tension caused by these Imbonerakure. These CNDD-FDD militants beat any passer-by as well as their colleagues who return at night mainly coming from Nyakabiga urban zone. According to the same sources, there is an example of a student who was arrested on 14 August 2017 from Nyakabiga and who was forced to walk on his knees from Tropicana I to Tropicana II. The sources indicate that the most targeted are Tutsi. The Imbonerakure pointed are Melthus Nsengiyumva of the Faculty of Law and who is representing the students, Pasteur Nkeshimana and Hermes all from the faculty of psychology at Kamenge campus but residing at Mutanga campus, Désiré Nimenya of the Faculty of Law BacIII, Obede of the faculty of Biology BacIII, Rubin of the Faculty of Economics and Administration who, according to our sources, coordinates these ill-treatment acts.

A house burnt in Busoni commune, Kirundo province

Information dated 14 August 2017 indicates that as of 13 August 2017, on Mukerwa hill, Busoni commune, Kirundo province, the house of Salvator Sinabajije, a 65-year-old Hutu, was burnt by Imbonerakure of the area. According to sources on site, Salvator sought refuge to Mukerwa zone office. He is accused of sorcery.

Forced participation in community work in Cankuzo province

On 19 August 2017, at Cankuzo stadium, Philippe Nduwayo, advisor to the commune administrator and Rose Ntakamurenga have blocked RN13 to stop any vehicle, motorcycle and bicycle passing and required them to participate to community work from 8:00 am to 10:0 am. No policeman was there, these two authorities held the rope themselves.

A citizen intimidated in Cankuzo province

On August 19, 2017, Barylur Bigirimana was intimidated by Christophe Nyamiye, Cankuzo zone head, accusing him of irregularity in Cankuzo province for originating from Kirundo. According to site sources, the zone head confiscated his identity card and ordered him to return to his native province. The same sources indicate that he was born in 1978 on Kunama hill, Busoni commune, Kirundo province, a cultivator as mentioned on his identity card. This vexed the natives of the Northern provinces who were attending these works. The ID card was returned some time later. According to the Constitution of the Republic of Burundi article 33 states that "*Every Burundian citizen has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the national territory and the right to leave and return to his country*".

Intimidation of people in Makamba commune and province

As of August 17, 2017, two ex-FAB retirees, Hashim Ndayizeye and Laurent, a disabled person and Fidèle Nduwayezu, were summoned by Makamba province governor Gad Niyukuri, informed by a

young Imbonerakure Mrisho Bigirimana nicknamed Kimura. According to sources on site, they were accused of links with armed movements in military training in neighboring countries. All these summoned persons live in Swahili quarter of Makamba province. They are scared after these gratuitous accusations. According to the same sources, this practice has become commonplace by Governor Gad Niyukuri, who inadvertently summons and/or arrests opposition members and ex-FAB retirees to intimidate them.

Manhunt in Kayogoro commune, Makamba province

Information dated August 14, 2017 indicates that Claver has been underground since August 12, 2017 because he is wanted by young Imbonerakure accusing him of having demonized their league. Gilbert is the team leader of these Imbonerakure.

III. OTHER FACTS REPORTED

Six people injured in Gitega commune, Gitega province

Six people were injured, one severely wounded, in a bar in Gitega urban center called Butezi Bar, around 10:00 pm on August 19, 2017, when a grenade exploded among clients having a drink. This grenade may have exploded from the neighboring plot. The six people were rushed to Gitega Regional Hospital for first aid. The reasons of this attack are not yet known, but some think of a jealousy because this bar was much frequented. Gitega police did not identify the perpetrators of the attack due to darkness. A watchman of this neighboring plot was arrested and jailed in Gitega police cell for investigation reasons.

Grenade explosion in province Cankuzo

On the evening of 16 August 2017, on Rusange sub hill, Ruramba hill, Gisagara commune, Cankuzo province, a grenade was thrown in the household of Norbert Havyarimana, a Tutsi teacher. According to information from one of his neighbors, this grenade aimed at destroying his property. His motorcycle was damaged. The author is not yet known.

A grenade launched in Ngozi commune and province

On the night of August 20-21, 2017, a grenade was thrown by unidentified people in a house in Kinyami quarter of Ngozi town. No human damage was reported. This household neighbors the SNR head in Ngozi province.

Armed attack in Gihanga commune, Bubanza province

On August 15, around 8:00 pm, on the RN 5, between the 5th and 6th avenue, in Gihanga commune, Bubanza province, Bubanza province governor's vehicle, Tharcisse Niyongabo, was attacked by unidentified gunmen while returning from a security meeting. According to our sources, these men run away into Rukoko forest after a short gunfight with the governor's police guard and no damage was reported.

Two children wounded in Buhiga commune, Karusi province

Information dated August 13, 2017 on Kigoma hill, Buhinyuza zone, Buhiga commune, Karusi province, an 11-year-old boy named Arsene found a grenade under an avocado tree and brought it home. The next day, he pulled the pin and was strongly wounded on the belly and another boy who was with him was hit on the head. Both were admitted at Karusi Hospital.

A person wounded in Kabarore commune, Kayanza province

On August 19, 2017, on Rukere hill in Kabarore commune, Kayanza province, Alexis son of Mbirigi was shot wounded by a police officer named Clément who fled after the crime. He accused him of returning from Rwanda. The police officer was arrested but the place of his detention remains unknown. Alexis is admitted in Kayanza hospital.

Three wounded and another fractured in Rusaka commune, Mwaro province

As of 20 August 2017, in Rusaka zone and commune, precisely in the commune town, a grenade was thrown by an unidentified person around 8:00 pm. According to the province police commissioner in Mwaro, gun shots were fired from a policeman who fired into the air. The people injured by this grenade are Patience, aged 35, Berahino, about 50 years old, and Sylvère, about 40 years old, and fractured, according to sources on site.

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.

Grenade attacks by unidentified men are still observed in different parts of the country.

Killings, abduction, torture, arbitrary and illegal arrests, targeted to opponents in general and in particular opposition parties' members namely FNL Agathon Rwasa's wing and MSD are also reported.

Intimidation by Imbonerakure youth are a source of threats to any person nonmember of the ruling party.

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;