

BURUNDIAN LIGUE OF HUMAN RIGHTS "ITEKA"

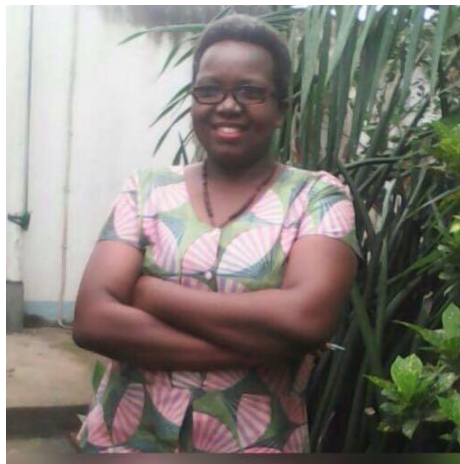
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Weekly bulletin « ITEKA N'IJAMBO » n°216 of the Burundian Ligue of Human Rights "ITEKA"

Week from 25 - 31 May 2020



In memory of Madam Marie Claudette Kwizera, Treasurer of Iteka, reported missing since December 10, 2015. From December 2015 to 31 May 2020, Iteka has documented at least 557 cases of enforced disappearances.

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ACRONYMS

CDS	: <i>Health Center</i>
CNDD-FDD	: <i>National Council for the Defense of Democracy</i>
CNL	: <i>National Congress for Liberty</i>
DCEFTP	: <i>Communal Direction of Education, Professional and Technical Training</i>
ECOFO	: <i>Fundamental School</i>
EPS	: <i>physical Education and Sport</i>
INSP	: <i>National Institute of Public Health</i>
OPJ	: <i>Judicial Police Officer</i>
PJ	: <i>Judicial Police</i>
SNR	: <i>National Intelligence Service</i>

0. INTRODUCTION

Over the reporting period of this bulletin, allegations of violations and human rights violations were recorded as follows: at least 7 persons killed including 4 corpses, 9 tortured, 1 abducted, and 4 GBV cases.

Among these victims are 1 woman and 2 minor killed.

Imbonerakure affiliated to CNDD-FDD party, administration officials and SNR agents are singled out as alleged perpetrators of most of these human rights violations.

This bulletin also notes cases of killings, torture, abduction and sexual violations in the country.

Over this period, Ligue Iteka noted cases of irregularities linked to the destruction of houses and the suspension of trade activities of CNL party members.

I. ALLEGATIONS OF VIOLATIONS, VIOLATIONS AND VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS

I.1. VIOLATION OF THE RIGHT TO LIFE

I.1.1. PERSONS KILLED BY IMBONERAKURE

An Imbonerakure killed in Mabanda commune, Makamba province

On May 29, 2020, in a bar located in Mabanda commune city, Makamba province, Pascal Nizigiyimana, Imbonerakure was stabbed to death by his friend Juvenal Havyarimana, also Imbonerakure. According to sources on site, the victim attacked Christine Minani, wife of Juvenal by trying to take his beer by force before pouring it on her. The alleged perpetrator and Christine Minani were arrested by police and jailed in Makamba prosecution office cell.

I.1.2. PERSONS KILLED BY UNIDENTIFIED PEOPLE

One person killed in Muyinga commune and province

On May 28, 2020, around 1:00 am, on Gitaba sub hill, Kiringanire hill, Cumba zone, Muyinga commune and province, Félix Ntirivamunda, was stabbed in the back by unidentified people. According to local sources, the victim died at his home a few hours later. According to the same sources, seven suspects were arrested for investigation reasons, namely Melchiade Ntakunguko, Issa Mbonabuca, Prosper Ndayikengurutse, teacher at ECOFO Mizuga, Néhémie Ndimurwanko, Fedison Ntahontungwa, Chadrack Niyonkuru all from the same hill and Mathieu Ruberintwari from Kara hill in Buhinyuza commune, Muyinga province.

Two bodies found in Bisoro commune, Mwaro province

On May 28, 2020, on Kariba hill, Bisoro commune, Mwaro province, a body of a woman and a child of at least 3 years old was found near the bridge of Mushwabure River on Bisoro side. According to local sources, the two bodies have not been identified. According to the same sources, the communal administrator took them to CDS Kanka while waiting for them to be identified. Locals believe that the victims were killed elsewhere and dumped there.

A body found in Bugarama commune, Rumonge province

As of May 26, 2020, in the waters of Ruzibazi River, Magara zone, Bugarama commune, Rumonge province, a body of an unidentified man was discovered. According to sources on site, this tied and blindfolded body was in an advanced state of decomposition and was first seen by children who were going to fetch water from this river. According to the same sources, this body was recovered by administration officials and the police, who took it to Magara CDS.

I.2. PERSONS TORTURED BY IMBONERAKURE AND ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS

Nine members of CNL party tortured in Kabarore commune, Kayanza province

As of May 27, 2020, on Rukere, Songore and Randa hills of Kabarore commune, Kayanza province, nine members of CNL party were beaten up by Imbonerakure.

- On Rukere hill, Nsengiyumva alias Padiri and Léonidas alias Fuku, were beaten up and injured by Ezéchiel Ndayiziga, Domitien Ngendabanyikwa, Jérémie Ndayisaba, all Imbonerakure supported by Serges Ndengeje, hill head.
- On Songore hill, Félix Nshimirimana, Pascal Ngendahayo, François Nduwimana and Jean Paul Sinzumunsi, all influential members of CNL party were beaten up and abused by Imbonerakure led by Patrice Nsaguye. According to local sources, they forced them to leave the premises and danced in front of their houses, chanting intimidating songs.
- On Randa hill, Arthémon Ndayishimiye, Fidel Ndayishimiye and Habonayo were beaten up by Imbonerakure including a nicknamed Senegalais, Justin Mwarimu, Désiré Nyabenda and Sotaire.

1.3. PERSONS ABDUCTED AND / OR REPORTED MISSING

An Imbonerakure reported missing in Mukaza commune, Bujumbura Mairie

Information received by Ligue Iteka on May 25, 2020 indicates that since March 10, 2020, Jean Claude Hakizimana alias Nuni, Imbonerakure, 33 years old, has been reported missing. According to sources on site, on February 26, 2020, around 8:00 p.m., on Buringa hill and zone, Gihanga commune, Bubanza province, this Imbonerakure was arrested by Ciza, living in village VI, communal leader of Imbonerakure in Gihanga commune on the orders of General Gervais Ndirakobuca alias Ndakugarika, General Administrator of SNR. According to the same sources, this communal leader of Imbonerakure ordered Laurent, leader of Imbonerakure on Buringa hill, living at the 7th avenue, to tell Jean Claude Hakizimana, to report to the communal leader in Gihanga.

When he arrived on his bike, he was taken by SNR agents to an unknown destination. On March 4, 2020, his family was informed by one of the prisoners in the SNR cell that theirs was in this cell in Bujumbura, close to Regina Mundi cathedral. The victim was accused of refusing to participate in the attack that took place in Nyabiraba commune, Bujumbura rural province, on February 23, 2020. On March 10, 2020, the family went to the SNR cell but SNR agents said that this person was never detained in this cell.

1.4. VIOLATIONS OF ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

A car wash bay of a member of CNL party closed in Ngozi commune and province

As of May 25, 2020, in Muremera quarter, Ngozi zone, commune and province, a car wash bay belonging to Pierre Mbaze, member of CNL party, was closed by police on the orders of Radjabu Songambere, commune administrator. According to sources on site, the victim complained to this administrator but the latter rejected his allegations arguing that he and his friends disappointed him during the triple ballot by voting massively for CNL party. According to the same sources, he indicated to them that it is CNL party which will come to reopen his washing bay.

Commercial activities of CNL party members suspended in Busiga commune, Ngozi province

Information received by Ligue Iteka on May 25, 2020 indicates that on May 23, 2020, at Rukeco trading center, Rukeco hill and zone, Busiga commune, Ngozi province, traders who are members of CNL party, including Léonidas Bugegene, who was an agent of CNL party, saw Désiré Nshimirimana, landlord and member of CNDD-FDD party with Imbonerakure coming to close their bars and restaurants. According to sources on site, Innocent Minani, Rukeco zone head denied these facts but promised to check and solve the problem.

1.5. SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

A girl raped in Butezi commune, Ruyigi province

In the evening of May 27, 2020, on Muyange hill, Mubira zone, Butezi commune, Ruyigi province, S., 13 years old, 3rd form student at ECOFO Muyange, was raped in class by Cyriaque Manisha, his teacher. According to sources on site, the victim, residing on the same hill, was taken to Butezi hospital for a medical examination which proved that the rape took place. According to the same sources, the Butezi police OPJ arrested the alleged author under arrest warrant dated May 28, 2020, around 5:00 p.m. and took him to Butezi police station cell.

A student raped in Vumbi commune, Kirundo province

Information received by Ligue Iteka on May 31, 2020 indicates that on May 16, 2020, Daniel, director of Vumbi communal Lycée, was arrested on Gasura hill, Vumbi commune by Gérard Niyokindi, General Prosecutor of the Republic in Kirundo on the orders of Janvière Ndirahisha, Minister of Education. According to sources on site, the latter was informed by one of the teachers of the aforesaid school and this director was accused of having raped for more than 2 years, G., a pupil in modern letters, 2nd form. According to the same sources, the victim revealed the secret to her friends at school, showing them messages that the director sent her each time to set up an appointment to have sex. As a reward, this director shared her exams to be done and the latter distributed them to her classmates. All of these messages were seen and verified on this student's phone by the teachers' board, Vumbi commune administrator Jean Baptiste Kwizera and the prosecutor. He was detained in Kirundo public prosecutor's cell for investigation reasons. The teachers' board had alerted to change him, but since he is an influential member of CNDD-FDD party, he was never worried.

A woman beaten up in Gisozi commune, Mwaro province

Information received by Ligue Iteka on May 31, 2020 indicates that on May 24, 2020, Gabriel Kobako, discipline prefect and EPS teacher at Gisozi communal high school, living in Gisozi center beat his wife Mélanie Nizigiyimana, teacher at ECOFO Nyamiyaga of Gisozi DCEFTP. According to local sources, her husband beat her at her sex using nettle. According to the same sources, the victim had swelling in the sex area and had pain all over her body. The alleged perpetrator was arrested by the police and spent one night in PJ Gisozi cell. The victim was treated at CDS Gisozi and went to rent a house at Gisozi center.

A body found in Muramvya commune and province

On May 27, 2020, on Busimba hill, Muramvya commune and province, a body of Béatrice Nibaruta, married and mother of 7 children, was found not far from her home. According to local sources, the victim was raped before being killed by Olave Ndagijimana and Théophile Ntirampeba after offering her drinks. According to the same sources, the alleged perpetrators and Samuel Ndayisaba, the bar owner, were arrested for investigation reasons. They were jailed in Muramvya prison.

I.6. THE OPAQUE MANAGEMENT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN BURUNDI

On May 20, 2020, the Ministry of Public Health and the Fight against AIDS published a press release on the monitoring of prevention and response actions against COVID-19.

According to our sources, up to May 30, 2020, the country has already recorded 63 cases but some doubt the credibility of these figures, especially since many people have already died after having typical symptoms of the coronavirus. Still according to our sources, several people are infected and receive no treatment and are sent back home, which augurs the possibility of a mass contamination tragedy in Burundi.

Also, a great questioning persists concerning the diagnosis of COVID-19 cases, more so than any other health facility except the INSP is authorized to do so. Doctors in other hospitals are intimidated not to communicate on the cases of this virus.

In addition, as much as the government of Burundi maintains a shady communication on the management of the COVID-19 pandemic, it also calls on the Burundian people to trust the only government channel for any information concerning this virus.

Finally, we are concerned that the opaque management of COVID-19 could cause a serious explosion in Burundi and constitute a source of contamination of this virus throughout the Great Lakes region.

II. SECURITY FACTS

A banana plantation of an Imbonerakure destroyed in Kabarore commune, Kayanza province

On May 29, 2020, in the morning, on Gikingo hill, Kabarore commune, Kayanza province, a banana plantation of Nyandwi alias Karubandisha, Imbonerakure, was destroyed by unidentified people. According to local sources, Jean Pierre Singirankabo, Benoît Minani, Léonidas Bucumi, Evariste Wizeyimana and Viateur, all members of CNL party are suspected of being the perpetrators of this destruction. According to the same sources, these CNL party members and Félix Bucumi, Gikingo, hill head, all fled the hill for fear of reprisals. This hill head is accused by Imbonerakure of supporting these members of CNL party.

An Imbonerakure injured in Kirundo commune and province

As of May 30, 2020, on Rutozi II sub hill, Runyonza hill, Cewe zone, Kirundo commune and province, Kagabo, Imbonerakure was wounded by gunshots from a policeman named Hakizimana. According to sources on site, the latter had been called by Pierre Karenzo, hill head

to intervene in a fight between two Imbonerakure Ndayisenga and Sibomana. According to the same sources, in search of Ndayisenga who had injured Sibomana, this police officer entered the home of the alleged perpetrator and his brothers Kagabo and Mukezangango wanted to take his gun by force, put him on the ground and the policeman defended himself by shooting at point-blank range, injuring Kagabo on thighs. He was admitted to Kirundo hospital. The gun was confiscated by his brothers and it took the intervention of the provincial commissioner who said that once the gun is not returned, this whole family will be arrested. The gun was handed over to the Commissioner and the police officer was jailed in the public prosecutor's cell for his safety.

A body found in Rutegama commune, Muramvya province

Information received by Ligue Iteka on May 25, 2020 indicates that on May 18, 2020, around 9:00 a.m., on Nyarunazi hill, Rutegama commune, Muramvya province, a body of Claudine Niyomwungere was found. According to local sources, the victim was murdered with a knife found next to her. According to the same sources, the alleged perpetrators are Berchmans Nshimirimana, her husband and Eric Kwizera. Her husband accused her of having been pregnant by another man while he was in prison.

Journalist attacked in Buhiga commune, Karuzi province

On May 27, 2020, around 2:00 p.m., on Buhiga hill, zone and commune, Karuzi province, in a bar called "ABRIANA" belonging to Evariste Kayobera, newly elected deputy of CNDD-FDD party, Blaise Pascal Kararumiye, correspondent journalist to Isanganiro radio, was intimidated and abused by a group of Imbonerakure including Star Niyonkuru, Issa Nizigiyimana, Saïdi alias Makara and Sadoscar. According to local sources, they accused him of having recorded their conversation and taking photos.

A member of CNL party abused in Buhiga commune, Karuzi province

On May 25, 2020, on Rwingoma hill, Buhiga zone and commune, Karuzi province, Jesus Marie Nzogumansaba, member of CNL party, was arrested by police when he took refuge in Buhiga hospital, fearing to be murdered by Imbonerakure. According to sources on site, all had started the day before, around 6:00 p.m. when he was at Buhiga market discussing with Imbonerakure including Saïdi alias Makara, Issa Nizigiyimana, Sadoscar, Kimana, Bob Marley and Damas on the results of triple ballot and this discussion turned into a dispute, then these Imbonerakure told him that once CNL party is defeated, Jesus Mary will be sent to hell. The next day, he went to the prosecutor's office to report the death threats to him and the latter reassured him, but he remained worried and took refuge in the hospital. At around 2:00 p.m. on May 25, 2020, the prosecutor recommended that the OPJ Buhiga summon these Imbonerakure and Jesus Marie to settle the case out of court. The police were informed of the place where Jesus Marie was hiding and arrested him and took him to the OPJ. After the talk with these Imbonerakure under the facilitation of the OPJ, he was released and returned home.

A house of a member of CNL party burned in Giharo commune, Rutana province

As of May 25, 2020, around 11:00 p.m., on Murembera hill, Gakungu zone, Giharo commune, Rutana province, a house of Lionel Habonimana, member of CNL party, 37 years old, was burnt by unidentified people. According to sources on site, the victim suspects young people of CNDD-

FDD party because he said that these people were threatening him to death if he did not join this party. According to the same sources, he lives in hiding for fear of these Imbonerakure.

A house of a member of CNL party burned in Giharo commune, Rutana province

On the night of May 29, 2020, on Gakungu hill and zone, Giharo commune, Rutana province, a house of Renadi Nibizi, member of CNL party, was burnt by unidentified people. According to sources on site, this member of CNL party had been threatened since the start of the electoral campaign and lived in hiding. According to the same sources, his house was burned down while he was still in hiding.

III. CONCLUSION

Allegations of violations, human rights abuses and violations resulting from the deterioration of the political environment since the start of the protests against President Pierre Nkurunziza's third term continue to be recorded across the country.

The bulletin reports of killings, torture and arbitrary arrests in the country.

Ligue Iteka has observed cases of irregularities linked to the elections of May 20, 2020 and blocking of access to social media platforms.

Ligue Iteka protests against the impunity of crimes which is attributed to those close to CNDD-FDD party. Members of this party involved in various crimes enjoy impunity with a complicity of public authorities.