



**LBDH/ 039 /2023**

Kampala, 13 March 2023

### **Declaration of Ligue Iteka on the abusive imprisonment of human rights defenders and 24 persons accused of homosexuality.**

Since the accession to power of the President Evariste Ndayishimiye in June 2020, and following his positive speeches and those of some members of the territorial administration, Ligue Iteka, the friends and partners of Burundi, as well as the Burundian people, expected the opening of civic space.

However, this hope has been overshadowed by the untimely harassment of civil society organizations, including the imprisonment of their leaders and beneficiaries of other programs, and the lack of a plan for the return of organizations in exile.

For the past month, five human rights defenders, including three women, have been unjustly imprisoned at Mpimba Central Prison, in addition to journalist Floriane Irangabiye, all six the imprisoned following their work for the voiceless.

On February 23, 2023, 24 persons accused of homosexual practices were arrested in ECOSO quarter in Gitega town, where they were in an entrepreneurship training, and were detained in Gitega police station before being transferred to the Gitega Central Prison, where they are being detained without trial. Among the 24 people are 7 women, 3 of whom have young kids in this prison, one of them being detained with her twins.

Ligue Iteka demands the immediate and unconditional release of the journalist Floriane Irangabiye, the 5 human rights defenders namely Sonia Ndikumasabo and Marie Emerusabe respectively representative and General Coordinator of the Association of Women Lawyers of Burundi, Audace Havyarimana, Legal Representative of APDH, Sylvana Inamahoro, Executive Director and Prosper Runyange, Coordinator of the land project of the same association and the 4 executives of MUCO association with its 20 beneficiaries unjustly



# 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*

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accused of homosexual practices. Ligue Iteka recommends that the Government of Burundi stop harassing civil society organizations and promote the opening of civic space in the country.

## On the behalf of Ligue Iteka

Anschaire NIKOYAGIZE



President