



Uwo uri wese ubahirizwa

LIGUE BURUNDAISE DES DROITS DE L'HOMME ITEKA



***HOW DOES THE REGIME OF GENERAL NDAYISHIMIYE EVARISTE DIFFER FROM THAT OF THE LATE PIERRE NKURUNZIZA IN TERMS OF SECURITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS: PERIOD FROM APRIL 25, 2015 TO APRIL 25, 2023***



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### 0. **Introduction**

Since April 25, 2015, eight years to the day, Burundi has been experiencing a political crisis following President Pierre Nkurunziza's decision to run for a third term in violation of the Arusha Agreement and the Constitution that stemmed from it. As soon as his candidacy for a third term was announced, protests against this mandate followed. The regime implemented a fierce system of repression against all forms of real or presumed political opposition, which resulted in the loss of many lives. Leaders of opposition political parties, civil society and the media were forced into exile, civil society organizations were banned and independent media were destroyed and suspended, international media were banned from operating in Burundi as well as local and international NGOs and UN agencies.

This repression has resulted in serious crimes under international law such as extrajudicial killings, targeted assassinations, enforced disappearances, gender-based violence and torture. Other forms of inhumane and/or degrading treatment as well as arbitrary arrests and illegal imprisonment were also recorded.

At the end of Pierre Nkurunziza's term, elections were held in May 2020, which brought to power a new President, Evariste Ndayishimiye, for a seven-year term, and a new government was put in place on June 30, 2020.

This political changeover in 2020 gave rise to a glimmer of hope with an inaugural speech by President Evariste Ndayishimiye, who reiterated his solemn commitment to “*build Burundi on solid foundations, namely: Good Governance, Respect and Protection of Human Rights*”.

This report covers two periods when two different regimes led the destiny of the Burundian nation but produced almost the same results in terms of human rights and security.



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### ***I. From absolute despair to faded hope***

#### **◆ *April 25, 2015 - June 29, 2020: absolute despair***

Since the outbreak of the political crisis in Burundi in 2015 following Pierre Nkurunziza's desire to run for the illegal and unconstitutional third term, serious human rights violations have been continually committed in Burundi including killings, enforced disappearances, arbitrary arrests of gender-based violence and acts of torture.

In addition to this unprecedented system of repression put in place by the Burundian regime, which is at the origin of all these crimes, the regime of Pierre Nkurunziza during his third term was characterized by the dissemination of hate speech against political opponents, representatives of civil society organizations or international partners.

The same period was characterized by the phenomenon of mass graves discovered in different parts of the country. At least 15 mass graves were discovered in different parts of the country, including Bugarama in Muramvya province, Vyerwa in Ngozi province, Gatunguru and Maramvya in Mutimbuzi commune, Kanyunya in Mukike commune and in Nyabiraba commune in Bujumbura Rural province, Mitakataka in Bubanza province, at the cemetery of Mpanda, Buringa in Gihanga commune, Maramvya in Mutimbuzi commune, Mutakura, Kanyosha in Bujumbura commune and in Matana commune in Bururi province.

We should note that the majority of these mass graves were found after the attack on the military camps on the night of December 11-12, 2015.

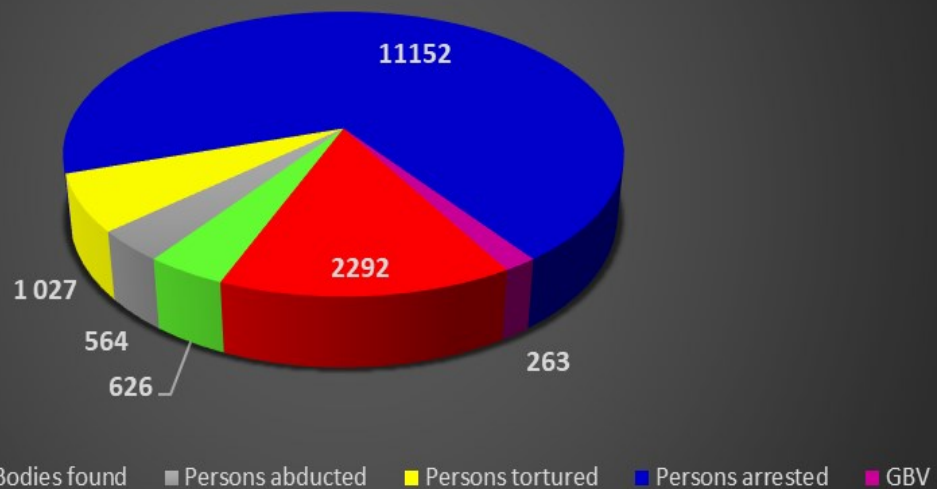
As shown in the graph below, under Pierre Nkurunziza's regime, from April 25, 2015 to June 29, 2020, despite the challenges linked to the lack of sufficient resources and the locked work environment, Ligue Iteka was able to document 2,292 persons killed, including 626 bodies found, 564 people abducted or reported missing, 1,027 people tortured, 11,152 people arbitrarily arrested, as well as 263 people who were victims of GBV.



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Period from 25 April 2015 to 29 June 2020 (62 months)



### ♦ *June 30, 2020 - April 25, 2023: hope faded*

Since his accession to power on June 18, 2020, President Evariste Ndayishimiye has been characterized by positive speeches advocating the improvement of the security situation, human rights in Burundi and good governance that have nourished hope in the Burundian population and the international community.

Yet, after nearly three years in power, it is clear that most of his positive speeches have been mere announcements.

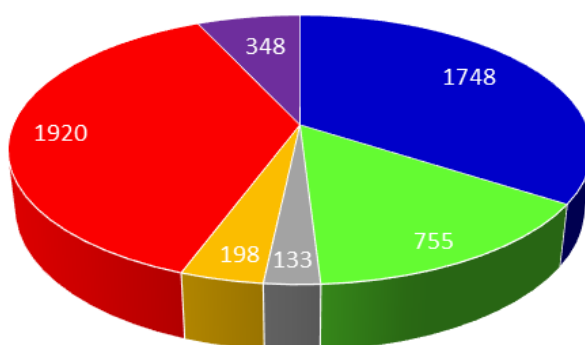
Thus, in the area of security and human rights, since President Evariste Ndayishimiye came to power on June 18, 2020, until April 25, 2023, despite the challenges linked to the lack of sufficient resources and a closed working environment, Ligue Iteka has been able to document 1,748 people killed, including 755 corpses, 133 people abducted, 198 people tortured, 1,920 people arrested, as well as 348 victims of



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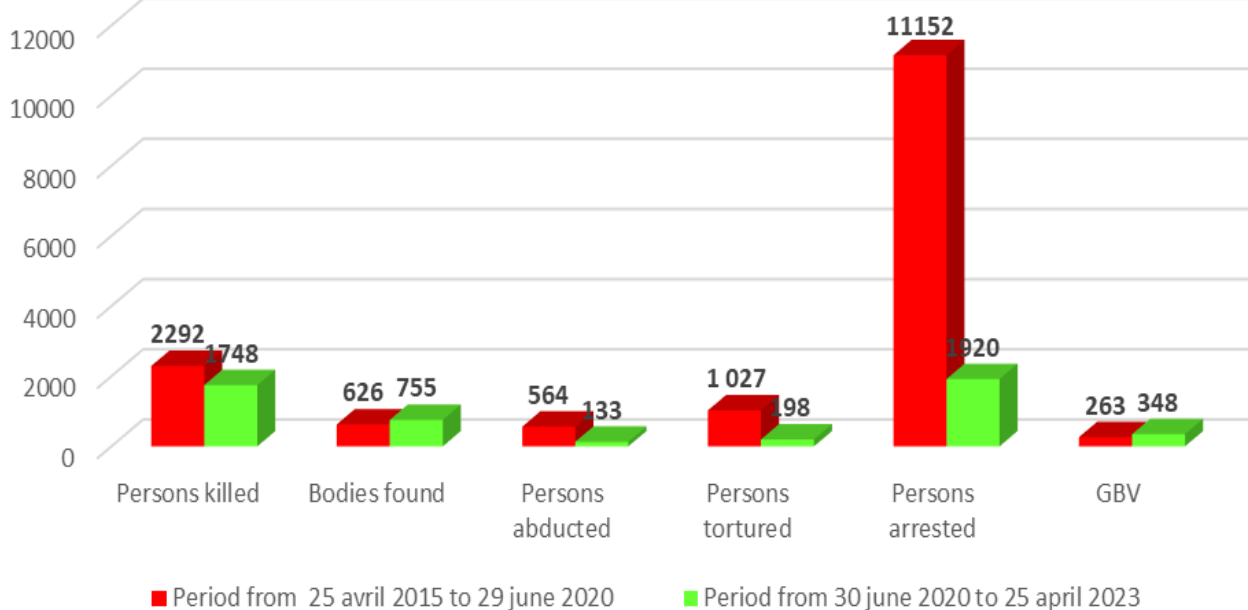
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Period from 30 June 2020 to 25 April 2023 (34 months)



■ Persons killed ■ Bodies found ■ Persons abducted ■ Persons tortured ■ Persons arrested ■ GBV

**II. Comparative chart of security and human rights records for the Pierre Nkurunziza and Evariste Ndayishimiye regimes: April 25, 2015 to April 25, 2023.**





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After five years and two months since 2015, Pierre Nkurunziza's repressive regime was a prelude to another era. Since June 18, 2020, the President of the Republic Evariste Ndayishimiye has taken over as head of the country following the elections held in May of the same year and a new government has been put in place as of June 30, 2022.

Despite the different periods and contexts of rule of the two regimes, it is clear that the extent of human rights violations in Burundi is almost the same.

Therefore, during the period covering the two regimes, from April 25, 2015 to April 25, 2023, Ligue Iteka has documented 4040 people killed, including 1381 corpses, 697 people abducted, 1225 people tortured, 13072 people arrested, as well as 611 people victims of SGBV.

Under Pierre Nkurunziza's regime, from April 25, 2015 to June 29, 2020, Ligue Iteka has documented serious human rights violations. During this regime and this period, Ligue Iteka was able to document 2,292 people killed, including 626 corpses, 564 people abducted or missing, 1,027 people tortured, 11,152 people arbitrarily arrested, as well as 263 people victimized by SGBV.

Since his accession to power on June 18, 2020, until April 25, 2023, Ligue Iteka has documented 1,748 people killed, including 755 corpses, 133 people abducted, 198 people tortured, 1,920 people arrested, and 348 victims of SGBV.

It should be noted that although the longevity of the two regimes is not the same, the first being 5 years and 2 months and the second nearly 2 years and 8 months, the figures of human rights violations in Burundi, human rights abuses and criminal acts are almost the same, including people killed, bodies found and SGBV. This suggests that by the end of Evariste Ndayishimiye's term, the extent of human rights violations in Burundi will have far exceeded the human rights violations during Pierre Nkurunziza's third term.

### ***III. What differentiates Pierre Nkurunziza and Evariste Ndayishimiye regime in terms of security and human rights? Only the modus operandi***

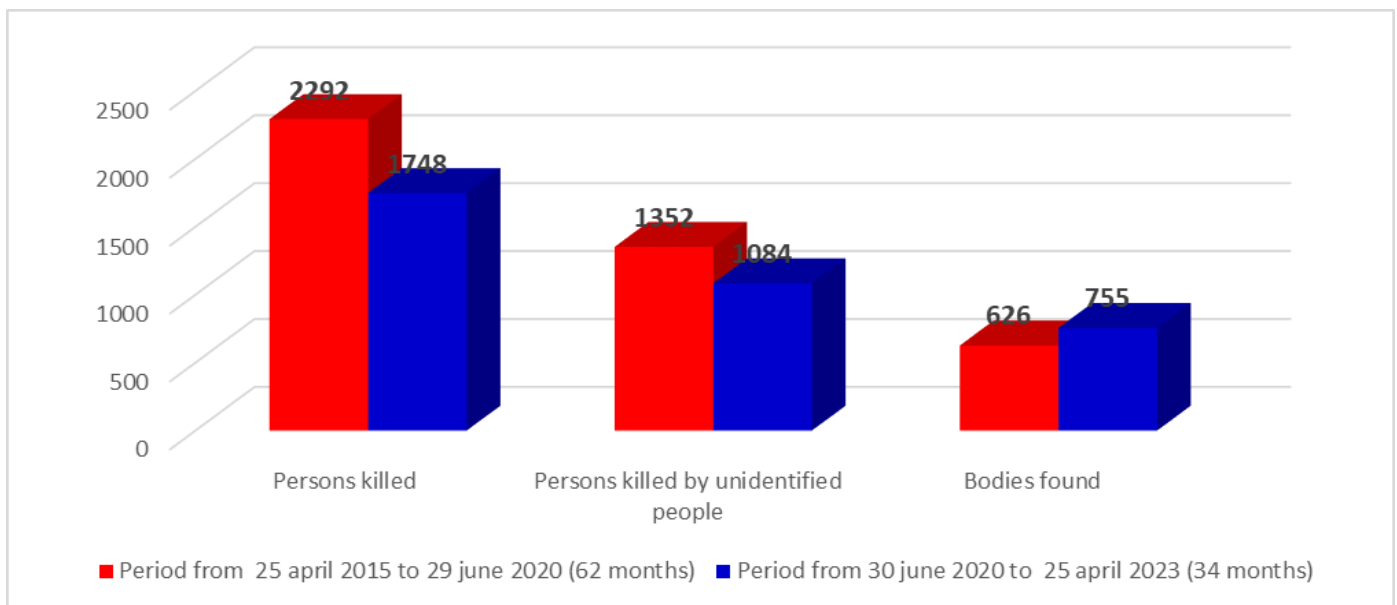
Comparing the number of people killed, persons killed by unidentified people and the number of corpses found, it should be noted that under President Ndayishimiye's regime, the number of bodies found is higher despite the period is short compared to Pierre Nkurunziza's reign. The perpetrators and victims are hard to identify because most of the victims are found as decomposing bodies and the local administration, members of the Imbonerakure militia, and the police authorities are usually mobilized to bury them without any investigation.

The numbers of persons killed and those killed by unidentified people are very close, although the period of rule of the two regimes is very different.



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The observation is that if Evariste Ndayishimiye’s regime does not redouble its efforts to control the crimes observed during these 34 months, his reign is likely to be more deadly despite this semblance of peace, whereas the regime of the late President Pierre Nkurunziza was marked by three turbulent periods, namely the demonstrations against the illegal and unconstitutional third term and the repression that followed, the 2015 and 2020 elections.



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### **IV. Conclusion and recommendations**

The crisis that Burundi has experienced since April 2015 following the desire of President Pierre Nkurunziza to seek a third illegal and unconstitutional term, has caused so much grief to the Burundian population during his term and repercussions on the rest of the country's life. If the current government is willing to redress the situation, special efforts must be made to neutralize the level of criminality and impunity that are the sources of human rights violations and abuses regularly reported by human rights organizations.

Considering the deteriorating security and human rights situation, Ligue Iteka recommends the following

#### **To the Government:**

- ⇒ To guarantee security and justice for all citizens;
- ⇒ To fully play its role in ensuring the protection of its population;
- ⇒ To conduct thorough investigations to identify the perpetrators of the crimes;
- ⇒ To bring to justice the perpetrators of the crimes without distinction;
- ⇒ To conduct investigations on the bodies already buried to know their identities, the reasons of murder and the perpetrators of these crimes.

#### **To the population:**

- ⇒ To remain vigilant and denounce any form of human rights violation and anything that is likely to jeopardize their security;
- ⇒ To avoid taking justice into their own hands and to fight for independent justice.

#### **To the international community:**

- ⇒ To remain close to the Government for their support in its good initiatives and to influence so that the respect of human rights is a reality in Burundi.