

BURUNDIAN LIGUE OF HUMAN RIGHTS "ITEKA"

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Weekly bulletin « ITEKA N'IJAMBO » n°428 of the Burundian Ligue of Human Rights "ITEKA"

Week from 1 – 7 July 2024



In memory of Madam Marie Claudette Kwizera, Treasurer of Iteka, reported missing since December 10 2015. From December 2015 to 7 July 2024, Iteka has documented at least 696 cases of enforced disappearances

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ACRONYMS

CNDD-FDD	: <i>National Council for the Defense of Democracy</i>
CNL	: <i>National Congress for Liberty</i>
CPGL	: <i>Economic Community of the Great Lakes Countries</i>
DRC	: <i>Democratic Republic of Congo</i>
ECOFO	: <i>Fundamental School</i>
GBV	: <i>Gender Based Violation</i>
IST	: <i>sexually transmitted Infection</i>
OPJ	: <i>Judicial Police Officer</i>
SOSUMO	: <i>Mosso Sugar Company</i>
SNR	: <i>National Intelligence Service</i>

0. INTRODUCTION

This bulletin covers the economic and security context that marked this period. It also deals with civil and political rights; economic social and cultural rights and ends with a conclusion.

Therefore, over this reporting period, the human rights and security situation was reported as follows: at least 6 people killed including 2 corpses, 1 victim of GBV, 2 victims of abduction and 4 persons tortured.

Among the victims are 4 children killed.

Let's mention that members of political parties were not spared. Thus, 1 member of CNL party was killed and 2 members of CNL party were tortured.

Imbonerakure, administration officials, SNR agents and police officers are singled out as the alleged perpetrators of most of these human rights violations and assassinations.

1. ECONOMIC AND SECURITY CONTEXT

1.1. ECONOMIC CONTEXT

World Bank delegation visits Burundi

A World Bank delegation visited Burundi to assess the level of execution of the projects it finances. Audace Niyonzima, Minister of Finance, said on the delegation's arrival that it would be visiting a number of private and public sector companies as part of the assessment. Audace Niyonzima indicated that these administrators would meet with the Prime Minister before meeting with the President of the Republic, Ndayishimiye Evariste.

Indeed, on July 5, 2024, the Head of State, Evariste Ndayishimiye, received in audience, at Gitega Palace, a strong delegation of 9 Executive Directors out of the 25 members of the Board of Directors of the World Bank Group. Their discussions focused on the quality of the partnership between the World Bank and Burundi. During the discussions with His Excellency the President of the Republic, priorities for Burundi's development were identified, notably the quality of governance, improvement of the macro-financial framework, the subject of foreign exchange and reserves, large-scale energy access projects, infrastructure development, digitization, health, education, agriculture and livestock.

As pointed out by Mr Louis Albisson, spokesman for the delegation, they had come especially to Burundi on a three-day mission to assess themselves the quality of the partnership between the World Bank and Burundi.

Such a delegation had first visited Burundi in 1987 and more recently, in late April 2024, precisely for a mission to assess the risks linked to the rising waters threatening the SP1 pumping station as part of the Urban Resilience Project funded by this financial institution.

1.2. SECURITY CONTEXT

1.2.1. PERSONS KILLED BY UNIDENTIFIED PEOPLE

A body found in Gihanga commune, Bubanza province

On July 5, 2024, at around 8 a.m., on the banks of Rusizi river, on Kagwema hill, Gihanga commune, Bubanza province, the body of Pascal Nzisabira, aged 22, was found decomposing in a papyrus field. According to sources on site, the victim had told his parents that he was going to bathe in Rusizi river. The body was buried on the same place by Red Cross volunteers in the presence of his family.

One person killed in Rumonge commune and province

On June 6, 2024, on Gashasha hill, Kigwena zone, Rumonge commune and province, a 12-year-old girl was killed and her widowed mother wounded in an attack by unknown people carrying machetes. According to a police source, the reason for the attack is not yet known, nor have the alleged perpetrators been identified. According to witnesses, the widow was with her 12-year-old daughter when they were attacked at home by these people armed with machetes. Four people living on the hill were arrested the same day and taken to the communal police station for investigation.

A body found in Muyinga commune and province

On July 6, 2024, passers-by discovered the body of an unidentified man aged between 35 and 40 in Kavumu hill on Ibizanyé river separating Burundi and Tanzania. According to witnesses, the victim had no identification. The administrative authorities, including the administrator of Muyinga commune, Amédée Misago, and the security forces went to the scene to make the report. The body was recovered and taken to Muyinga hospital mortuary in a double-cabin vehicle belonging to Muyinga commune at around 10am.

1.2.2. PEOPLE KILLED FOLLOWING THE SETTLEMENT OF SCORE

One person killed in Isare commune, Bujumbura rural province

On July 2, 2024, at around 9p.m., on Kibuye hill, Isare commune, Bujumbura rural province, Dionise Mbonabirama, aged 78, a farmer and member of CNL party, was clubbed to death by his son Ezéchiel Ndagijimana, aged 39, also a member of CNL party. According to local sources, land disputes were at the root of the murder. Dionise was buried in Kibuye cemetery on July 3, 2024.

One person killed in Ntega commune, Kirundo province

On July 5, 2024, at around 10 p.m., on Gisitwe hill, Runyankezi zone, Ntega commune, Kirundo province, J Marie Miburo, aged 40, farmer and member of CNDD-FDD, was stabbed to death by his wife Florence Nsabimana, aged 37, farmer and member of CNDD-FDD. According to witnesses on site, the woman stabbed him in the heart, and Miburo died on the spot as he returned home. According to witnesses, the woman was arrested by Ntega local police commissioner, and Florence confessed to the crime. Florence accused her husband of living with another woman. The family had four children, including 1 daughter. The deceased was buried on July 6, 2024.

1.2.3. OTHER SECURITY INCIDENTS

A child burned in Butaganzwa commune, Kayanza province

On July 2, 2024, at around 8pm, on Nyabibuye hill, Butaganza commune, Kayanza province, Eliackim Iteriteka, aged 13, was burnt to death by Liesse Niyibitanga, his mother, accused of stealing beans from home and selling them at the market. According to witnesses on site, Liesse Niyibitanga roped her child's arms and legs, then took a piece of wood from the fire and burned him on both legs. According to the same witnesses, Liévin Ndayiziga, the victim's father, was not at home and found his child tied up with burns on his legs, then called for help from neighbors to transport the child to Musema hospital. That same night, the hill head Onesphore Ndagijimana ordered the Imbonerakure to arrest Liesse, and they took her to Butaganzwa commune cell, where she is now jailed.

A child injured in commune Butaganzwa, province Kayanza

On July 02, 2024 at 2 p.m., on Musema hill in Butaganza commune, Kayanza province, 14-year-old Délicieux Ndimubandi, an 8th form student at ECOFO Musema, injured 12-year-old Akimana Fiston, a 6th form student at this school, when he tried to circumcise him with a scissors. According to witnesses, the victim tried to cover his penis with pieces of clothing to prevent bleeding, but to no avail. Fiston reported the incident to his father Irankunda Claude, who took the child to Musema hospital. Fiston's father also reported the case to Musema police station head Anaclet Dusabe and the hill head Violette Bigirindavyi. Délicieux was arrested by the police on the same day and was jailed in Butaganzwa police station cell and failed the second sit exams.

II. CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS

Burundi is one of the countries adhering to the international covenant on civil and political rights (1965) and its optional protocol (1976) without any reservation on May 9, 1990, which as part of its implementation, Burundi took measures in domestic legislation in particular in its constitution of June 7, 2018 (Main Law) in its article 19 which guarantees that all the rights proclaimed and guaranteed by regularly ratified international texts are an integral part of this constitution, implementing texts are put in place, namely the penal code of December 29, 2017 and the criminal procedure code of May 11, 2018 and other institutions for the protection of human rights in Burundi have been created.

II.1. THE RIGHT TO LIFE

A person killed in Isare commune, rural Bujumbura province

On July 2, 2024, around 9 p.m., on Kibuye hill, Isare commune, Bujumbura rural province, Ezéchiél Ndagijimana, aged 39, member of CNL party, was killed with clubs by Imbonerakure including those named Jean Marie and Claude. According to sources on site, the victim had just killed his father Dionise Mbonabirama, aged 78, following land conflicts and he was arrested by these Imbonerakure then killed him too. Note that Ezekiel was also buried in Kibuye cemetery on July 3, 2024.

II.1. RIGHT TO PHYSICAL INTEGRITY

II.1.1. GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

A child raped in Kayanza commune and province

On June 25, 2024, around 3 p.m., on Musave hill commune and Kayanza province, Y. I aged 13, student at Ecofo Kirema was raped by Jean de Dieu Ingabire, aged 26, welder and single. According to the victim, the alleged perpetrator called her into his room telling him that he wanted to give her bread and raped her. According to the same victim, he told her mother everything that happened and she took her to

SWAA-Burundi to approve or not the rape. The rape was confirmed and the child was given medication to prevent STIs. The parents filed a complaint with the OPJ Gilbert Niyonkuru. He issued a warrant to the police to arrest the perpetrator. The criminal is in Ngozi prison to serve 25 years in prison.

II.1.2. PERSONS TORTURED

Four persons tortured in Mutimbuzi commune, Bujumbura Rural

On July 4, 2024, at night, on Nyabunyegeri hill, Rubirizi zone, Mutimbuzi commune, Bujumbura rural province, four people including Cyriaque Nduwimana responsible of CNL party on Nyabunyegeri hill and Olivier Nshimirimana responsible for ideology were arrested and beaten up by Imbonerakure led by Jean Marie Bacamurwanko nicknamed Maheke. According to witnesses on site, the two CNL leaders fell into a group of imbonerakure as they were returning to their homes, they were beaten up then they were taken to Nyabunyegeri police station. According to the same witnesses, Olivier Nshimirimana's sister and his father Joseph Ntirandekura went to the place of arrest to find out about the situation and were also beaten and taken to Nyabunyegeri position. All four were transferred to Rubirizi zone cell. CNL party members denounce the mistreatment of opposition members, especially those from their party.

II.2. RIGHT TO FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT

II.2.1. ABDUCTIONS AND/OR REPORTED MISSING

The constitutional law of Burundi guarantees in article 38, to every individual, the benefit of a fair trial and that their case is heard and judged within a reasonable time.

Two persons abducted in Rugombo commune, Cibitoke province

Information received by Ligue Iteka on July 1, 2024 indicates that on June 29, 2024, on Mparambo II hill, Rugombo commune, Cibitoke province, Justin Nirema and Yves Nsanzugwimo, bikers, were abducted by Félix Havyarimana, provincial head of SNR in Cibitoke accompanied by young Imbonerakure. According to sources on site, the victims were taken in the vehicle of this official to a destination unknown by his family. Justin Nirema and Yves Nsanzugwimo were arrested with packages containing beans on Rusizi River where they were preparing to cross the border into the DRC to supply their relatives.

Restriction of freedom of movement of young people in Karuzi province

On July 1, 2024, during the ceremonies marking the 62nd anniversary of the country's independence, at Karuzi provincial stadium, Dévote Nizigiyimana, the Governor of Karuzi province warned communal administrators to carefully check identification documents of applicants for different certificates which give them access to passes, CPGL and passports. This is to reduce and refuse these documents to young people on vacation after the remarks of the Minister of the Interior, Martin Niteretse dated June 26, 2024 in Gitega, who prohibits all young people from no longer crossing the country's borders to look for work.

III. ECONOMIC SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

Burundi ratified accession to the international covenant on economic, social and cultural rights dated March 14, 1990, adopted in New York on December 16, 1966.

Injustice in the distribution of fuel in Giharo commune, Rutana province

Information received by Ligue Iteka on July 1, 2024 indicates that on June 30, 2024, around 10 a.m., on Butezi hill and zone, Giharo commune, Rutana province, the trader Arakaza, a gas station owner, received 10 thousand liters of fuel but the distribution was characterized of speculation by the administrative authorities. According to eyewitnesses, Arakaza received a phone call from the Governor of Rutana province, Olivier Nibitanga, ordering him to fill 2,000 liters in plastic drums loaded in the truck and to fill the two tanks. In total, 4000 liters out of 10,000 were served to the Governor alone. According to the same sources, there was a long chain of trucks including two from SOSUMO factory which should have had fuel first at least 4 thousand liters but were served after carrying out the governor's order. With approximately 2 thousand liters remaining, they were distributed in two equal parts between people who have hulling machines and some vehicles that consume fuel. Remember that it has currently been forbidden to transport fuel in cans, even those who have machines are forced to take their tanks to the gas station.

Forced contribution in Ngozi commune and province

The population of Gasebeyi hill, Mivo zone, Ngozi commune and province, is subject to ransoms by the hill authorities and CNDD-FDD party members. According to witnesses on site, anyone aged 18 is ordered to pay 2 kg of beans or corn intended, according to Angelo, hill head, for the construction of the new Butanyerera province. Likewise, all women were forced to give the Bakenyerarugamba officials of this hill 2000 Bif. According to these same witnesses, these women from CNDD FDD party, the ruling party, promise all the women on this hill to have loans of ten million each, and explain that these collected funds serve as a guarantee fund for this loans. These women victims of this ransom say they have waited for these loans but in vain for more than 2 months. These witnesses say that this phenomenon of forced contribution and ransom has lasted for 2 months and any person who refuses to give this money and food is deprived of some public and administrative services in this province.

IV. CONCLUSION

Ligue Iteka notes a continued deterioration of human rights situation across the country.

It protests against the impunity of the crimes observed and asks the Minister of Justice to ensure the strict application of the law against the perpetrators of the crimes.