

## **BURUNDIAN LIGUE OF HUMAN RIGHTS "ITEKA"**

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*Weekly bulletin « ITEKA N'IJAMBO » n°430 of the Burundian Ligue of Human Rights "ITEKA"*

**Week from 08 – 14 July 2024**



*In memory of Madam Marie Claudette Kwizera, Treasurer of Iteka, reported missing since December 10 2015. From December 2015 to 14 July 2024, Iteka has documented at least 697 cases of enforced disappearances*

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## **ACRONYMS**

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

**DRC** : *Democratic Republic of Congo*

**GBV** : *Gender Based Violation*

**OPJ** : *Judicial Police Officer*

**RN** : *National Road*

**TGI** : *High Court*

**UPRONA** : *Union for National Progress*

## **0. INTRODUCTION**

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

Therefore, over this reporting period, the human rights and security situation was reported as follows: at least 4 people killed including 2 corpses, 2 victims of GBV, 1 victims of abduction and 30 persons victims of arbitrary arrests.

Among the victims are 1 member of UPRONA party killed, 2 minors arbitrarily arrested and a child victim of physical violence.

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

## **I. ECONOMIC, GOVERNANCE, JUDICIAL AND SECURITY CONTEXT**

### **I.1. ECONOMIC CONTEXT**

#### **“Inkebuzo” caravan of the President of the Republic of Burundi**

On July 9, 2024, the Head of State, Evariste Ndayishimiye, started “Inkebuzo Caravan” in Mugina and Rugombo communes, Cibitoke province, where he joined pupils on vacation and the local population for contour lines tracing. In Mugina commune, the President visited Muyange rabbit breeding center currently under construction, with a production capacity of 48,000 young rabbits a year, owned by 5 young breeders from the provinces of Cibitoke, Gitega, Mwaro, Karuzi and Bujumbura Mairie.

After Cibitoke, he continued this activity in Bubanza province, precisely in Gihanga commune, where he visited “BMC” company, specialized in the manufacture of chalk and owned by 5 young entrepreneurs. This company has a daily production capacity of 6 boxes of chalk, each containing 20 boxes of chalk, each containing 120 pieces of chalk. The President of the Republic continued his visits to other provinces of the country to check on the progress of projects carried out by youth. In his message, President Ndayishimiye urged schoolchildren to capitalize on Burundi's hard-won peace to start preparing for their future in the emerging Burundi of 2040, by initiating small income-generating projects to ensure their financial empowerment. He also invited the population he met to work hard so that every pocket has money, and appealed for environmental protection, recommending that the administration get more involved in raising awareness of the need to trace contour lines on all the hills.

### **I.2. GOVERNANCE CONTEXT**

#### **Embezzlement of humanitarian aid in Nyanza-lac commune, Makamba province**

Information received by Ligue Iteka on July 8, 2024 indicates that on June 26, 2024 in Kabonga zone, Nyanza-Lac commune, Makamba province, the Red Cross distributed humanitarian aid to 120 vulnerable people in this zone. .

According to eyewitnesses, each beneficiary would receive 230,000 Bif as well as kitchen tools consisting of 3 pots, 6 plates, 20 tablespoons and 2 water buckets. Vandrome Niyonkuru, Shukuru Nyandwi, Kiraranganya, Tabu Zoya and Yotamues, hill leaders demanded that each vulnerable person give 100,000 Bif, 1 pot, 3 plates, 10 tablespoons and 1 water bucket. Marie Goreth Manirankunda, communal

administrator of Nyanza-lac, was informed of this case but did not react.

### ***1.3. JUSTICE CONTEXT***

#### **Flagrance trial in Rumonge commune and province**

On July 11, 2024, around 4 p.m., at Rumonge TGI, there was a flagrant trial for the 4 people accused of murdering Ajei Icishahayo, aged 15, and injuring his mother<sup>1</sup>, Imelde Habonimana, all of Gashasha hill, Rumonge commune and province.

According to sources on site, the alleged perpetrators are Adolphe Kwizerimana, aged 20, Janvier Ndereyimana, aged 24, Fulgence Iradukunda, aged 27 and Samuel Nzoyihaya, aged 17, all members of Imbonerakure youth league. The alleged perpetrators were assisted by a lawyer and the minor was also assisted by a lawyer. The defense pleaded not guilty and requested time to bring witnesses for the defense and the hearing was postponed.

### ***1.4. SECURITY CONTEXT***

#### ***1.4.1. PERSONS KILLED BY UNIDENTIFIED PEOPLE***

##### **A body found in Rugombo commune, Cibitoke province**

On July 8, 2024, in the morning, on the 2<sup>nd</sup> street on Munyika I hill, Rugombo commune, Cibitoke province, a decomposing body of an unidentified person, aged 30, was found. According to an administrative source met on site, this body first seen by farmers who went to the fields very early in the morning on the banks of Rusizi River. Some residents contacted on site reported that the body was discovered in a place of intense traffic, which suggests that the deceased would have been killed elsewhere and taken to this location. According to the same source, patrols are regularly carried out there by Imbonerakure. All the residents who spoke out demanded very in-depth investigations to find out the reasons and perpetrators of this crime.

Gilbert Manirakiza, administrator of Rugombo commune confirms the facts and asks his residents to collaborate properly with the judiciary and the police in order to complete the investigations as quickly as possible. The victim's body was taken by police to Cibitoke Hospital mortuary.

##### **A body found in Butezi commune, Ruyigi province**

Information received by Ligue Iteka on July 8, 2024 indicates that on July 3, 2024, in Ruvubu river, Butezi commune, Ruyigi province, a body of Jean Berchmans Nzikoruriho, native of Kireka sub-hill, Gas-hurushuru hill, guard of Ruvubu park, was found.

According to local sources, this body was discovered around 3 p.m. with injuries showing that the victim was killed with machetes. The victim had told his wife that he was going to Karusi to meet one of his friends who had promised him onion seeds. His wife alerted the administrative authorities who quickly began searching. The perpetrators and reasons for the crime remain unknown.

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<sup>1</sup><https://ligue-iteka.bi/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Weekly-bulletin-iteka-n-ijambo-429.pdf>

## ***1.4.2. OTHER SECURITY INCIDENTS***

### **One person killed in Rugombo commune, Cibitoke province**

On July 11, 2024, on Rusizi river, Rugombo commune, Cibitoke province, bordering the DRC on the side of Mparambo II hill, Rugombo commune, Cibitoke province, Richard Dusabe, black water trafficker was killed and drowned by Mathias Ndinzemenshi, aged 25, his courier. The alleged perpetrator was arrested by the police and taken to Cibitoke police station. According to a local source, this illegal trafficker was going to Congo to stock up on black water. The same source reports that the deceased was drowned in the middle of the river after being robbed of all his possessions, including a sum of money in his possession. The family of the deceased was about to revenge had it not been for the intervention of the police who came in time. Gilbert Manirakiza, administrator of Rugombo commune confirms the facts, advises his inhabitants to wait for the police investigations and the court judgement and urges the population to put an end to the intense movements of recent times towards the DRC in the search for fuel following numerous incidents on Rusizi River.

### **An ambush on RN12 in Buhiga commune, Karuzi province**

On July 8 and 9, 2024, around 4 a.m., on RN 12 at Mwoya hill, Buhiga zone and commune, Karuzi province, a group of unidentified people composed of 4 people, armed with knives, committed arrests and thefts.

According to witnesses, Ngendakumana, CNDD-FDD party member, aged 47, truck driver, from Nzibarina hill, bordering Mwoya hill when he was going to take his vehicle to start his work supplying construction materials, was ambushed by these four criminals and beat him and stole a sum of 600,000 Bif that he had received the day before as payment for the vehicle.

The victim was found in the gutter by passers-by around 6 a.m. and took her to Buhiga hospital where he was admitted. The next day, around 9 p.m., Niyonkuru, CNDD-FDD party member, aged 33, from Mwoya hill, a bicycle mechanic, was also ambushed in the same place by these four criminals not yet identified, still armed with knives and stole 280,000 Bif as well as two Android phones and a small phone.

The victim was not beaten because he quickly gave up his bag but they asked him if he recognized any of them and they ordered him to turn back.

## ***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 member of UPRONA party killed in Bugabira commune, Kirundo province**

On July 12, 2024, at a police position of Kiyonza zone, Bugabira commune, Kirundo province, a body of Ntibatinya, aged 31, farmer, UPRONA party member, was found dead hanging on a 4-meter high room ceiling by the hill head and members of his family after being contacted by the police officers who had arrested the victim.

According to witnesses in Kiyonza, the day before the incident, Ntibatinya went to buy cigarettes in a kiosk and he lit his cigarette inside where there were police officers quenching their thirst and the latter was accused of smoking in public.

Quarrels started between these police officers and the victim. The latter was jailed in Kiyonza zone cell and then taken to a room at their station. The family refused to take the dead body until the arrival of the provincial commissioner who ordered it to be taken either to the mortuary or to the cemetery for burial. Fights resumed and the family demanded that examinations be carried out to prove the cause of death. The decision taken was to take the body to the local mortuary while awaiting examinations to determine the cause of death. Two people are arrested by the provincial commissioner, including a police officer named Bukuru and a prisoner named Kagabo.

## ***II.2. RIGHT TO PHYSICAL INTEGRITY***

### ***II.2.1. GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE***

The Law on Gender-Based Violence adopted in Burundi in 2016 constituted a major step forward. It guaranteed better protection, notably by providing a definition of rape that took into account the question of consent and by prohibiting harmful traditional practices.

### **A girl raped in Giharo commune, Rutana province**

Information received by Ligue Iteka on July 8, 2024 indicates that on July 4, 2024, on Giharo hill, zone and commune, Rutana province, around 8 p.m., Fabrice Burakeye, Father of Giharo parish, Rutana diocese, raped L.N, aged 17, domestic worker at Alexis Nduwayo, teacher at Saint Joseph Communal Lycée on Giharo hill.

According to eyewitnesses, around 8 p.m. upon returning home, Alexis and his wife found their house closed, an unusual thing while it was still early, they knocked. The servant (victim) heard that her bosses were arriving and she gently opened her room and took Father Fabrice out through the back door.

Alexis asked the victim why she closed the door so early and the neighbors came to see what was happening in Alexis' house, and they found that the victim had been raped.

Following a maneuver by the Father trying to cover up the affair, Alexis Baragomwa, representative of CNDD-FDD party on Giharo hill, arrived at the scene, and called the police in Giharo zone in order to arrest this professor, Alexis Nduwayo for in-depth investigations. Around 9 p.m., the professor was taken to Giharo commune cell in Rubaho. Seeking to protect himself, the Father called that same night, Ernest, representative of the young Imbonerakure of Giharo zone. In agreement with Ernest and Alexis Baragomwa, the Father was hidden.

Information relating to this rape spread throughout the zone, to the commune and up to the level of Rutana diocese. Under the order of Gitega Archdiocese, Bonaventure, Father Fabrice was arrested on the morning of July 5, 2024 and was taken to Rutana province police station cell for investigations.

### **A woman beaten in Kayanza commune and province.**

On July 10, 2024, on Rwintare hill, Kayanza commune and province, Angeline Butoyi, aged 27, was beaten naked by her husband Mbarushakubaho Mathias, aged 31, both farmers. According to the victim, her husband used to beat her at night for refusing to honor her marital duty. She decided to leave her marital bed to sleep in another room with their two children.

That night, the man came home around 10 p.m. and broke down the door where his wife was and poured cold water on his wife. No one came to help. In the morning, the woman took her belongings and her two children and returned to her parents' house.

## ***II.3. RIGHT TO FREEDOM***

### ***II.3.1. 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.

### **A person abducted in Ngozi commune and province**

On July 10, 2024, around 7 p.m., at a bar to Prosper's, in Ngozi commune and province, Prosper Nsabimana was arrested by Imbonerakure including Jonas nicknamed Cokumpa, responsible for Imbonerakure on Muremera hill, and boarded a double cabin vehicle with tinted windows identified as belonging to Jean Bosco Ndayishimiye, responsible for young Imbonerakure in the new province of Butanyerera.

According to eyewitnesses, a man came to have a beer at Prosper's bar and asked the servant, who is the victim's daughter, to give him her boss's phone number. The girl refused but this man received it from another customer then he called Prosper Nsabimana telling him that he has a cow to sell at a lower price.

The girl who came to ask the reason for her father's abduction and the payment of the bill was beaten up. The family followed the vehicle to see if Prosper was taken to the judicial police cell, but to no avail. The family says they do not yet know the reason for this abduction and are worried about his safety.

### ***II.3.2. ARBITRARY ARRESTS***

International and national texts in Burundi recognize the principle of innocence until proven guilty, and that detention is an exception.

### **Thirty people arrested in Rumonge commune and province**

Information received by Ligue Iteka on July 8, 2024 indicates that on July 3, 2024, around 5 a.m., the police from Rumonge communal police station carried out a search in Birimba quarter and 30 people including 2 minors were arrested and taken to the police station cell in Rumonge.

According to sources on site, some were accused of being among the groups who stole and injured passers-by and others of not having identity cards.



### **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.

#### **III.1. RIGHT TO HOUSING**

##### **A widow's house destroyed in Ntahangwa commune, Bujumbura Mairie**

On July 8, 2024, in the third cell of Nyabagere quarter, Gihosha zone, Ntahangwa commune, Bujumbura mairie, the house of Euphrasie Bucumi, widow, was destroyed by the judges of the residence court with the authorization of its president.

According to an eyewitness, Euphrasie Bucumi claims to have never appeared before the judges and was informed of the loss of her trial abruptly. Kitchen tools, clothes, chairs, mattresses and mosquito nets were scattered on the street.

According to the victim, judges from Gihosha residence court came to her house without warning and demolished her house, saying it was on the orders of the high court. The victim was not at home. These judges were accompanied by Didace Nibizi, head of Gihosha quarter.

According to the victim, the judges threw her belongings outside, then removed the roof of her house and left with the sheets.

The victim also specifies that two police officers hit and handcuffed her younger brother when the latter tried to ask where his mother was until they finished destroying the house. A sum of 520,000 Bif which was under the mattress was lost when her belongings were taken out of the house.

The victim does not hide her incomprehension how a person who has never appeared before the courts can lose a trial because the day she was summoned, the president of the high court indicated that she had lost the case and claims that the court had sent her documents to sign, but she had refused to sign papers whose contents she did not know.

According to the victim, the land titles of her plot were falsified by the new parish priest of Kamenge two years back because the documents for her plot are kept at the parish. The plot in question was purchased in 2003 by Véronique Barakamfitiye, Euphrasie's mother, who died in 2006 after building her house with the help of a missionary priest named Thomas.

Asked by journalists about the case, the president of the residence court replied that he did not have much to say about it since they had carried out the orders from the high court.

### **IV. CATEGORICAL RIGHTS**

#### **IV.1. CHILDREN'S RIGHTS**

##### **A minor burned in Bururi commune and province**

On July 8, 2024, in Kigwati quarter, Bururi commune and province, Tony Irishura, aged 7, was burned and beaten with a police baton by his own mother Vestiane Nyandwi, CNDD-FDD party member. According to family members, neighbors alerted at the time of the incident to report the burns inflicted on his back by his single mother.

Before the OPJ Jean Bosco Ndayikengurukiye, this child specified that he was burned accused by his mother of having stolen food (beans). Vestiane Nyandwi was arrested and taken to Bururi provincial police station the cell.

## ***V. 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.