

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

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*Weekly bulletin « ITEKA N'IJAMBO » n°435 of the Burundian Ligue of Human Rights "ITEKA"*

**Week from 12 to 18 August 2024**



*In memory of Madam Marie Claudette Kwizera, Treasurer of Iteka, reported missing since December 10 2015. From December 2015 to 18 August 2024, Iteka has documented at least 700 cases of enforced disappearances*

<b>CONTENTS</b>	<b>PAGES</b>
<b>ACRONYMS.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>0. INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>I. ECONOMIC, JUDICIAL AND SECURITY CONTEXT.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>I.1. JUDICIAL CONTEXT.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>I.2. ECONOMIC CONTEXT.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>I.3.SECURITY CONTEXT.....</b>	<b>5</b>
1.3.1. PERSONS KILLED BY UNIDENTIFIED PEOPLE.....	5
1.3.2. OTHER SECURITY INCIDENTS.....	6
<b>II. CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>II.1. RIGHT TO LIFE.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>II.2. THE RIGHT TO PHYSICAL INTEGRITY.....</b>	<b>7</b>
II.2.1. GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE.....	7
<b>II.3. RIGHT TO POLITICAL LIBERTY.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>II.4. RIGHT TO EQUAL JUSTICE .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>III. ECONOMIC SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>IV. CATEGORICAL RIGHTS.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>IV.1. CHILDREN’S RIGHTS.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>V. CONCLUSION.....</b>	<b>9</b>

## **ACRONYMS**

<b>ANAGESSA</b>	: <i>National Agency for Food Security Stock Management</i>
<b>CDFC</b>	: <i>Family and Community Development Center</i>
<b>CNDD-FDD</b>	: <i>National Council for the Defense of Democracy</i>
<b>COOPEC</b>	: <i>Savings and Loans Cooperatives</i>
<b>DCE</b>	: <i>Communal Director of Education</i>
<b>ECOFO</b>	: <i>Fundamental School</i>
<b>FRODEBU</b>	: <i>Front for Democracy of Burundi</i>
<b>GBV</b>	: <i>Gender Based Violence</i>
<b>PJ</b>	: <i>Judiciary Police</i>
<b>PRODECI</b>	: <i>Integrated Community Development Project in Burundi</i>
<b>SNR</b>	: <i>National Intelligence Service</i>

## **0. INTRODUCTION**

This bulletin covers the judicial, political, 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 5 persons killed, including 3 found dead and 2 victims of GBV.

Among the victims is one newborn killed. Political intolerance was also observed.

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

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

### **I.1. JUDICIAL CONTEXT**

#### **Journalist Floriane Irangabiye released on presidential pardon**

On August 15, 2024, Floriane Irangabiye, aged 36, a journalist for Igicaniro radio, living in Rwanda, was released from Bubanza prison after being pardoned by the President of the Republic, Evariste Ndayishimiye, on August 14, 2024. Floriane Irangabiye left the prison around 5:45 p.m. Upon her release, she declared: "I am very happy, first of all because I have just been reunited with my family." She also welcomed the President's decision, indicating that it was a strong gesture, without forgetting to thank the human rights organizations that have never stopped advocating for her release. Floriane Irangabiye had been sentenced in January 2023 to ten years in prison for "undermining the integrity of the national territory." This sentence, which had been appealed, was confirmed in May 2023, to ten years in prison and to pay a \$500 fine. Floriane Irangabiye was arrested in August 2022 while visiting her native country, Burundi.

Ligue Iteka expresses its satisfaction with this release and requests that other prisoners, including journalists and members of human rights associations unjustly convicted, be released to enjoy their right to movement and to freely exercise their work without fear. Ligue Iteka reiterates its request to the Government of Burundi to stop taking human rights defenders hostage and release them in order to please its technical and financial partners.

### **I.2. ECONOMIC CONTEXT**

#### **Visit to the African Development Bank Group Office in Burundi**

In August 2024, a delegation from the African Development Bank visited Burundi to assess the progress of electrification projects financed or co-financed by the Bank Group. This delegation included the Bank's country manager in Burundi, Pascal Yembiline and an expert on the Bank's energy projects in Burundi, Raymond Kitandala Luhana. On August 9, 2024, this delegation, which was accompanied in particular by the Ministers of Finance, Budget and Economic Planning, Audace Niyonzima and that of Hydraulics, Energy and Mines, Ibrahim Uwizeye, visited the project works in Rubirizi and Kabezi, in the province of Bujumbura rural<sup>1</sup>. It was able to assess the progress of work in the field as well as the quality of cooperation between Burundi and the Bank in the implementation of key infrastructure for the development of Burundi. In Rubirizi, they visited the transmission station, under construction, as part of the Kamanyola-Bujumbura interconnection project, co-financed by the African Development Bank and the European Union at 37 million dollars.

<sup>1</sup>Burundi : autorités et représentants de la BAD visitent des projets d'électrification ([alwihdainfo.com](http://alwihdainfo.com))

The station, once completed, will constitute the injection point for the energy that will be produced by the regional hydroelectric power plant of Ruzizi III, which is also funded by this Bank. With an installed capacity of 160 megavolts, the largest in the country, the transmission station will strengthen the reliability and stability of the electricity network of Bujumbura, the economic capital of the country, and will ensure its operating flexibility. While waiting for the construction of the Ruzizi III power plant, this station will be connected to the existing lines to distribute the energy produced by the national power plants. Commissioning is scheduled for December 2024.

In Kabezi, the delegation assessed the progress of the electrification works as part of phase 1 of the Energy Access Project, which covers 36 localities in 11 provinces of Burundi. This project, exclusively funded by the previously mentioned bank and the Burundian government, for a total amount of 26 million dollars, will ultimately connect 25,000 households in the beneficiary localities; which will contribute to improving the living conditions of the populations.

The two parties noted the progress made and the challenges to be overcome, in particular the calendar delays in implementation and the need to accelerate the fair compensation of all those affected by the projects. The Minister of Finance expressed satisfaction with the qualitative development and the level of progress of the works and urged the companies and teams of the Water and Electricity Production and Distribution Authority to redouble their efforts to meet the deadlines set for the completion of the works. Pascal Yembiline recalled the actions to be undertaken quickly by each party for a smooth completion of the projects. He reiterated the Bank's readiness to support the Government of Burundi to develop its energy sector.

### ***1.3.SECURITY CONTEXT***

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

##### **A body found in Mishiha commune, Cankuzo province**

On August 12, 2024, in a stream in Mwiruzi, separating Tanzania and Burundi, Mishiha hill, Munzenze zone, Mishiha commune, Cankuzo province, a body of an unidentified man, with wounds on the neck showing that he was strangled and found by local people. According to sources on site, the body was buried by the people of this locality with the authorization of Frédéric Nzoyisaba, communal administrator without carrying out investigations. On August 14, 2024, in the coordination meeting of development partners and provincial service heads, at Agora hotel in Cankuzo, the governor announced that the victim was from Tanzania returning to Burundi and would have been killed on the Tanzanian side and then thrown into this stream on the Burundian side. The governor added that he was from Kirundo province without giving details on the origin of this information.

##### **Two bodies found in Busiga commune, Ngozi province**

On August 13, 2024, at Gatundabagore trading center, Rugori hill, Busiga commune, Ngozi province, two bodies of unidentified men, decapitated, were found early in the morning by passers-by. According to witnesses from this center, the neighbors of this place say they heard and saw a white van around 5 a.m. but they do not know exactly if it was the latter that dropped these bodies. The hill administration was informed and called Busiga police that made the report. According to the same witnesses, the burial of these bodies took place the same day at Rugori cemetery under the order of the administrator Joseph Nahimana who was on the scene.

### ***1.3.2. OTHER SECURITY INCIDENTS***

#### **Fraud in the purchase of corn by ANAGESSA agents in Mwakiro commune, Muyinga province**

The Mwakiro zone head, Pascasie Murerwa, in collaboration with ANAGESSA corn collection agents, whose team leader is Hassani Ndinduruvugo, were arrested and imprisoned because they each chopped more than five kilos of corn for each quantity from the producer who came to sell his production during the recent corn collection. Mwakiro zone head called Emmanuel Ndabiyereke, Mwakiro hill head, Edissa Tuyishemeze, Jean Claude Kamugisha, currently Director of ECOFO Gihoza, Zénobie Kayombo and Donatien, the current Director of ECOFO Kabingo, as well as a retired national police officer known as Nzisabira, asking them to open accounts at COOPEC to collect the money and give it to him in turn. According to witnesses, this was done after Mwakiro communal administration, Jocelyne Baranyanka, ordered producers who sold their maize harvest to open accounts at COOPEC Mwakiro to facilitate their payment. Hassani Ndinduruvugo, frightened by the situation, decided to flee, leaving a note to the administrator narrating what they had done with Mwakiro zone head, Pascasie Murerwa. Jocelyne Baranyanka, the administrator of Mwakiro commune reassured him by reassuring to protect him and asking him to help him pursue this case.

## ***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. RIGHT TO LIFE***

The law guarantees it, human dignity must be respected and protected by the State and in the event of infringement, sanctions should be applied to the alleged perpetrators, art 21 of the constitutional law of the country, as for the observed and convincing facts, the political will overrides it.

#### **A person killed in Rutegama commune, Muramvya province**

Information received by Ligue Iteka on August 18, 2024 indicates that on August 11, 2024 around 7 p.m., on Munanira I hill, Rutegama commune, Muramvya province, Diomède Bankakaje, aged 35, was beaten by Pascal Bigirimana, a police officer from Marumane position. According to eyewitnesses, Diomède Bankakaje was with his friend having a drink at the bar located on Mugogo sub-hill of the same Munanira I hill and this police officer came and started asking them for a drink. Diomède replied that he had no money and that he was going home. This police officer insisted until they started arguing. According to the same witnesses, while trying to leave the place, Diomède was chased by this police officer and the latter beat him on the head with the watchmen's club. The victim was quickly transported to Marumane Health Center on Munanira II hill for first aid and then to Kibimba hospital in Giheta commune, Gitega province, where he died the next day. The communal commissioner came to take the alleged perpetrator at night to help him escape. The victim's family is being intimidated by other police officers of this police station by forbidding them to file a complaint and this intimidation is confirmed by Diomède Nibigira, head of Munanira I hill. The administrator Nimbona Stanislas and communal commissioner Jean Pierre Dodiko informed the family that they have no reason to complain.



## ***II.2. THE 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 Muramvya commune and province**

On August 13, 2024, around 5 p.m., on Gakenke hill, Ryarusera zone, Muramvya commune and province, N. N, aged 15, an 8<sup>th</sup> form student at ECOFO Gakenke, was raped by Fulgence Ndikumana, aged 21, a farmer and member of Imbonerakure militia. According to witnesses, the victim was from Mwizinga market, Ryarusera zone, and she met Fulgence, who accompanied her to a bush some 500 meters from her home where the alleged perpetrator forced her to have sexual intercourse. According to the same witnesses, the neighbors saw her with a large red dot on her white skirt and N.N confessed that she had just been raped by Fulgence. As Fulgence learned that he was wanted, he fled to an unknown location and the victim was taken to Ryarusera hospital where medical tests confirmed the rape.

#### **A woman beaten in Gatara commune, Kayanza commune**

On August 14, 2024, around 7 p.m., on Gakenke sub-hill, Muhingira hill, Gatara commune, Kayanza province, Chanella Irangabiye, aged 25, mother of two children and a farmer was beaten by her father-in-law Daniel Masabarakiza, aged 57, a widower. According to sources on site, the victim complained on August 15 to the CDFC that she was beaten with punches and feet by her father-in-law at night when he found her at home while her husband Nicolas Miburo was in Bujumbura city for business. According to the same information, Daniel Masabarakiza beat his daughter-in-law accusing her of cutting a tree in his field without his permission but the victim said that her father-in-law was sexually harassing her by telling her that he wanted to spend the night with her. Chanella Irangabiye alerted the hill head Marie Nshimirimana, the same night and under the influence of the Imbonerakure of the hill including Sadiki, Emmanuel and Athanase, the case was sorted out amicably. The victim received a sum of 30,000 Bif for silencing everything about the case especially to her husband and these Imbonerakure imposed a fine of 60,000 Bif on Masabarakiza and they had to buy crates of beer and banana wine at Mugumya center on the same hill Muhingira the same night.

## ***II.3. RIGHT TO POLITICAL LIBERTY***

#### **Theft of SAHWANYA FRODEBU party flag in Nyanza-lac commune, Makamba province**

Information received by Ligue Iteka on August 15, 2024 indicates that on August 3, 2024, around 2 a.m., on Bukeye hill, Nyanza-lac zone and commune, Makamba province, a team of 9 young Imbonerakure led by Etienne Nibirantije, leader of Imbonerakure on Bukeye hill, uprooted and stole the flag of Sahwanya FRODEBU party planted in front of the communal office of this party. According to Anselme Girukwigomba, communal leader of FRODEBU party in Nyanza-lac commune, this is a kind of provocation because all these Imbonerakure were not worried despite the referral to the communal administrator, Marie Gareth Irankunda. The leader of this party says that they are very worried about the party members and the surrounding neighbors who are in political insecurity and insistently ask for good political sociability. According to witnesses, the communal administrator has not reacted yet to the complaints of the communal leader of FRODEBU party.

## ***II.4. RIGHT TO EQUAL JUSTICE***

### **Impunity for corruption of ANAGESSA agents in Giteranyi commune, Muyinga province**

On August 14, 2024, at Giteranyi communal office, Muyinga province, Jean Belchimas Mpabansi, economic advisor to the governor, handed over 15 million Bif to the 20 farmers who had sold corn to the 9 ANAGESSA agents in the three Mugano, Giteranyi and Ruzo zones of this commune. According to witnesses, these farmers had been forced to bribe these agents to facilitate their sale. They reported them to the administrator of Giteranyi commune, Floride Nduwayezu, on August 15, 2024. According to the same witnesses, the administrator had the alleged perpetrators arrested and forced them to return the sum received as a condition for their release. This official encourages the population to report cases of fraud. Farmers fear for their safety as the nine ANAGESSA agents were released on condition that they repay the money and no legal proceedings have been initiated.

## ***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.

### **Contributions for the 2025 elections in Giharo commune, Rutana province**

Information received by Ligue Iteka on August 13, 2024 indicates that in Giharo commune, Rutana province, a contribution for the elections was required from the civil servants of this commune based on the conclusions of the meetings of CNDD-FDD members. According to eyewitnesses, these contributions are requested from civil servants of the Ministry of Education and Health without distinction of political affiliation as follows: Director of ECOFO: 15,000 Bif, Head teacher: 10,000 Bif, Director of post-fundamental school: 25,000 Bif, Prefect or technical director: 20,000 Bif, Teacher at ECOFO (D6, D7): 5,000 Bif, University level teacher: 10,000 Bif, DCE: 100,000 Bif, DCE advisers: 50,000 Bif, CDS heads: 50,000 Bif, Nurse: 10,000 Bif, Communal doctor: 100,000 Bif and janitor: 5,000 Bif

According to the same sources, the deadline for these contributions, for civil servants, were set for August 10, 2024, while for those in health, on August 15, 2024. Each school director collected the contributions from his teachers and submitted them to the DCE, the latter will deposit them in the account No. 17421520103-41 Bancobu.

### **Grumbings from members of the civil service mutual insurance company about the census**

Information received by Ligue Iteka on August 12, 2024 indicates that from July 29, 2024 to August 8, 2024, a census of members of the civil service mutual insurance company was held in all the communes of the country. According to witnesses, the census aimed to capture data in order to provide biometric cards to members affiliated to the civil service mutual insurance company. In the southern provinces of Bururi, Makamba and Rumonge, the mutual insurance agents met them at the commune cities but were unable to provide the service properly due to the problem of internet connection, from which members spent days without being served. The mutual insurance agents informed their members to report to the provincial cities, but there also they explained that they reported at least 3 consecutive days and returned without being counted with the same reason "poor internet connection". They were forced to make several trips to their original communes and provincial cities, others stayed in hotels. This census started on July 29, 2024 and ended on Friday, August 8, 2024, but since almost all members had not yet been counted, the census period was extended until August 31, 2024.



## **Embezzlement of public funds in Muyinga commune and province**

On August 15, 2024, in Muyinga commune and province, Laurent Kayumba, technical advisor in charge of development in Muyinga commune and Nduwayezu, businessman, cited in many economic crimes linked to public procurement in Muyinga province were arrested by the head of SNR in Muyinga, Wilson Nzisabira then taken in his Hilux vehicle following embezzlement. According to witnesses from Muyinga province, the two are accused of having poorly executed the school construction contract won by Nduwayezu in PRODECI Turikumwe project which implements the public infrastructure projects scheduled in the communal community development plan in Muyinga provinces, Ngozi, Cankuzo and Ruyigi where this project is located. He took them manu militari to the SNR headquarters in Bujumbura for investigations. According to sources on site, they used poor quality and non-durable materials to carry out the work at a ridiculous cost. It should also be noted that Nduwayezu had won the SOGEA water drilling contract in Giteranyi commune but the water never flowed. This contract worth more than 4 billion was doomed to failure and the population of Giteranyi commune is still waiting for the drinking water.

### ***IV. CATEGORICAL RIGHTS***

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

##### **A newborn killed in Butaganzwa commune, Kayanza province**

Information received on August 18, 2024 indicates that on August 2, 2024, at night, on Rugoma hill, Butaganzwa commune, Kayanza province, Adélaide Niyiragira, aged 21, a farmer, gave birth and killed her child then threw it in the toilet. According to witnesses, Adelaide's mother, Colette Bucumi, saw the blood all along the way to the toilet and called her husband Julien Ndenzako. The parents remembered that the neighbors suspected that their daughter Adelaide was pregnant and went to Adelaide's room calling her but she refused to answer and the door was locked from inside. They called the neighbors and the hill head, Charles Surwavuba, who ordered the door to be broken down. They found Adelaide sitting on the bed and she confessed the crime. The hill head, helped by the surrounding population, removed the body of this newborn from the toilet and buried it. Adelaide was jailed in Kayanza commune cell in provincial city.

##### **A child chased from home in Isare commune, Bujumbura province**

Information received by Ligue Iteka on August 18, 2024 indicates that on August 4, 2024, on Gishingano hill, Nyambuye zone, Isare commune, Bujumbura rural province, Vital Nimfasha, aged 13, a student at ECOFO Gishingano in 4<sup>th</sup> year, was chased from home by his father Michel Nyandwi, member of CNDD-FDD party, a farmer. According to a neighbor of Michel's family, this child lived with his father after his mother left known as Taussi Nindorera. According to the same witness, the marital conflicts between the father and mother of this child made the latter also enter into conflict with his father because he expelled his mother and married another woman until his father chased him from home. The child is sheltered by neighbors.

### ***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.