

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

*Approved by Ministerial Order n ° 530/0273 of 10 November 1994 revising Order No. 550 /029 of 6 February 1991*



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*Weekly bulletin « ITEKA N'IJAMBO » n°438 of the Burundian Ligue of Human Rights "ITEKA"*

**Week from 2 to 8 Septembre 2024**



*In memory of Madame Marie Claudette Kwizera, Treasurer of Iteka, reported missing since December 10 2015. From December 2015 to 8 September 2024, Iteka has documented at least 700 cases of enforced disappearances*

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## **ACRONYMS**

<b>CDS</b>	: <i>Health Center</i>
<b>CNDD-FDD</b>	: <i>National Council for the Defense of Democracy</i>
<b>CNL</b>	: <i>National Congress for Liberty</i>
<b>COTEBU</b>	: <i>Burundi Textile Complex</i>
<b>ECOFO</b>	: <i>Fundamental School</i>
<b>GBV</b>	: <i>Gender Based Violence</i>
<b>OPJ</b>	: <i>Judiciary Police Officer</i>
<b>REGIDESO</b>	: <i>Water Distribution Authority</i>
<b>SNR</b>	: <i>National Intelligence Service</i>
<b>UPRONA</b>	: <i>Union for National Progress</i>

## 0. INTRODUCTION

This bulletin covers the governance and security context that marked this period. It also deals with civil and political rights as well as categorical rights and ends with a conclusion.

Therefore, over this reporting period, the human rights and security situation was reported as follows: at least 3 people killed, including 1 found dead, 2 victims of GBV and 2 victims of arbitrary arrests.

Among the victims is 1 newborn killed. A member of CNDD FDD party was arbitrarily arrested.

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

## 1. GOVERNANCE AND SECURITY CONTEXT

### 1.1. GOVERNANCE CONTEXT

#### **Restriction on the use of the Laisser-Passer for people from neighboring provinces such as Cankuzo traveling to Tanzania**

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Development Cooperation sent a letter, dated August 29, 2024, to the Ministry of the Interior, Community Development and Public Security, received on August 30, 2024, informing that the use of the Laisser-Passer (Ujirani Mwema) for Burundians traveling to Tanzania is now limited to a limit of 6 kilometers from the border. This decision, taken on August 14, 2024 and effective since August 19, 2024, was motivated by the fact that most of Burundians who entered Tanzania with this Laisser-Passer did not respect the exit deadlines and carried out illegally remunerated activities. Previously, this Laisser-Passer allowed people to go as far as Kigoma city.

#### **CNDD-FDD party member dead and ten others injured in Nyanza-lac commune, Makamba province**

On September 4, 2024, Ligue Iteka received information that a road accident occurred on August 31, 2024 on RN 3, in Rimbo, Nyanza-lac Commune, Makamba province. The accident caused the immediate death of Jean Bosco Ndikumana, a farmer, and injured 10 Imbonerakure returning from Bujumbura after the Imbonerakure Day ceremonies. Witnesses attributed the accident to speeding, while sources among the Imbonerakure aboard the Fuso truck indicated that the driver and several young Imbonerakure were drunk. Police authorities attributed the accident to speeding and poor road conditions. The injured were taken to Nyanza-lac health district hospital, while Jean Bosco Ndikumana's body was taken to the hospital mortuary and then to his native hill of Gitara, Mabanda commune, Makamba province, for burial. Some believe that the transport of people in trucks intended for luggage is one of the causes of the accident. The victim's relatives wonder how the victim's family will be compensated, as the truck was not insured for passengers. Jean Bosco Ndikumana's burial took place on September 3, 2024, organized by the leaders of the Imbonerakure youth at the national level.

#### **Regulations on religious organizations in Burundi**

In Burundi, Law No. 1/30 of September 16, 2022 established the regulatory framework for religious organizations, setting a deadline of 2 years to comply with its requirements. These requirements include a minimum level of education for leaders, transparent management of funding, and a minimum distance between places of worship. Interior Minister Martin Ninteretse announced on September 4, 2024 that these regulations would come into force on September 16, 2024. Religious organizations will be required to declare the origin of their funds, submit a detailed annual report, and manage foreign financial aid

transparently. However, these regulations raise concerns about religious freedom and financial transparency, as they could restrict religious freedom and be perceived as interference in the internal management of religious institutions. Religious organizations will also be required to declare their funds, bank accounts, and assets, and financial transactions will have to be processed through the Bank of the Republic of Burundi to ensure their legality and transparency.

### **Poor conditions of detention in Cibitoke police station cell**

On September 8, 2024, Ligue Iteka received alarming information concerning the deplorable prison conditions in Cibitoke police station cell. According to concordant sources, this cell, designed to accommodate about forty detainees, currently houses at least 159 persons, including about ten minor children, in inhumane conditions. The detainees suffer from promiscuity, malnutrition and diseases due to the lack of hygiene. Access to the cell is conditioned by bribes, and detainees are forced to pay exorbitant sums for basic "services" to the policemen guarding the cell - a bribe ranging from 2,000 Bif to 5,000 Bif to visit a detainee and at the same time, the new detainee is forced to pay a sum of 50,000 Bif, called "candle" in the detainees' terminology. Corruption is widespread, and magistrates receive bribes to release detainees accused of serious crimes. These sums are shared with the police guards and the detainees' managers. The latter, according to a police source, are mostly accused of thefts from households and fields. A human rights defender calls on the authorities to release detainees imprisoned without valid reasons and to punish corrupt police officers. The prosecutor of the High Court of Cibitoke implores the intervention of the governor to obtain the help of humanitarians in order to decrease the overcrowding of the cell.

### **Mpungwe mountain burned in Ruyigi commune and province**

On September 4, 2024, in Ruyigi commune and province, Mpungwe mountain caught fire. According to sources on site, it was David, aged 14, a child of Bucumi who is over 50 years old, member of CNDD-FDD party, from Rukaragata hill in the said commune, who burned this mountain and was arrested by neighbors and the police as well as his father Bucumi. According to the same sources, the child's uncle called Minani gave a sum of 10,000 Bif to burn the mountain and the child was arrested and taken to the re-education center while his father Bucumi is in Ruyigi central prison.

## ***1.2. SECURITY CONTEXT***

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

#### **A body found in Bugabira commune, Kirundo province**

On September 5, 2024, on Gatorongero sub-hill, located in Gaturanda hill, Kigina zone, Bugabira commune, Kirundo province, the body of Ildephonse Ndagijimana, nicknamed Buyozi, aged 38, member of CNDD-FDD party and farmer, was discovered decapitated in the street nearby ECOFO Gaturanda. The victim's neighbors indicated that the population of the hill considered him a notorious thief and had even refused to bury him. However, under the order of Jérémie Ndayishimiye, permanent secretary of Bugabira commune, and OPJ Prosper, who went to the scene, the population finally buried the victim in Gaturanda in the evening. It is worth noting that on the same hill, in 2020, people suspected of sorcery, including a person nicknamed Gasafuriya, were chased away and 15 houses of these suspects were burned.

## **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 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 little girl raped by a soldier in Bukeye commune, Muramvya province.**

On September 5, 2024, on Rwantsinda hill, Bukeye commune, Muramvya province, F.A. M, aged 8, a 2<sup>nd</sup> year student at ECOFO Rwantsinda, was raped by Corporal Alexandre Niyimpagarikiye, a soldier. According to the victim, she was going to get firewood near Ruhinga military position, which is near her home. This soldier, a former CNDD-FDD rebel, had apparently been watching her and then called her near a bush and threatened to kill her if she refused to have sex with him. The little girl agreed unwillingly. According to sources on site, this soldier was arrested by two of his military colleagues who were alerted by the child's screams just after the act. They roped him and took him to Bukeye police cell. The next day, this soldier was transferred to Muramvya provincial police cell in on the orders of the Public Prosecutor in Muramvya, Jean Paul Bigirindavyi, where he is awaiting interrogation. The victim was taken to Nyamirambo CDS in Bukeye commune by her mother. It should be noted that the medical examination confirmed the rape.

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

On September 8, 2024, Ligue Iteka received information that, on September 1, 2024, in Gisoro I quarter, Kayanza commune and province, Belyse Ahishakiye, aged 25, a waitress in a bar called "Relax", was assaulted by Oscar, member of CNDD-FDD party, nicknamed Muliyoni, a clothes seller and married to two women. According to the victim, Muliyoni had flirted her and, after she refused, hit her with a bottle, kicked and punched her before Patrice Nsengiyumva, the bar owner and police officer, intervened. Nyingabira, the public Prosecutor, who was present, arrested Oscar, but he was released shortly after and was seen returning to the same bar a few minutes later proud of what he had done. An eyewitness said that Patrice Nsengiyumva had to call the provincial governor, Remy Cishahayo, to intervene. The victim was taken to PEKA health center and Oscar was arrested on the governor's orders and taken to Kayanza police station cell. The victim and the bar clients are demanding justice, as Oscar has allegedly assaulted other clients in different bars, feeling protected by his acquaintances with Kayanza authorities.



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

### ***II.3.1. PERSONS ARRESTED ARBITRARILY***

#### **A director of Isanganiro radio and television arrested in Mutimbuzi commune, Bujumbura province**

On September 2, 2024, around 7 a.m., on Tenga hill, Rubirizi zone, Mutimbuzi commune, Cibitoke province, Charles Makoto was arrested by the police accused of rebellion.

According to an eyewitness, he was taken to Rubirizi zone cell and was heard by the zone head who told him that he was arrested on the orders of Désiré Nsengiyumva, Governor of Bujumbura province. After 4 hours of detention, he was released. Makoto's family specifies that this arrest is linked to a land dispute with a man named Deo, a former official of the Ministry of Water and currently an informant of the SNR who is trying to trace a road through this director's plot. On August 29, 2024, men in a van with tinted windows arrived at this plot and one climbed over the fence wall at Makoto's house.

Residents of Rubirizi say they do not understand how the police can arrest someone with a warrant while he has never been summoned.

#### **A member of CNDD-FDD party arrested in Makamba commune and province**

On September 2, 2024, in Muyogo quarter of Makamba province city, Gérard Karenzo, president of the independent communal electoral commission, member of CNDD-FDD party was arrested by the police. According to his neighbors, the police searched his home and the Mountain of Salvation Ministry Church (MOSIM) where he is the legal representative. According to the faithful of this church, its legal representative Gérard Karenzo nicknamed Bonesha was arrested to be questioned on the mismanagement of church funds and the divisions he sows among the faithful. According to these same faithful of this church, Gérard Karenzo is accused of mismanagement of funding from abroad and that anyone who dares raise his voice is accused by the latter of being a CNL member to silence him. Gérard Karenzo was released after a day following negotiations between the president of the independent provincial electoral commission Philémon Nahabandi and the prosecutor of Makamba. They add that this legal representative is a member of the independent communal electoral commission, like several others, under the umbrella of religious while they are CNDD-FDD members.

## ***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.

#### **Forced collection of one hundred thousand Burundian francs by Imbonerakure in mairie**

At COTEBU market located in Ngagara quarter of Ntahangwa commune in Bujumbura, young members of CNDD-FDD party, known as Imbonerakure, are demanding a financial contribution of 100,000 Burundian francs from stall and shop owners to finance the party's election campaigns. Some traders, fearing reprisals, pay this amount, while others consider it exorbitant and potentially ruinous for their small businesses. These traders denounce the recurring practice of the Imbonerakure of forcing them to pay contributions for the benefit of the ruling party, even though not all Burundians are members of this party. In addition to traders, other people are also targeted by these contributions, amounting to 1,000 to 2,000 Burundian francs per person of voting age. Those who refuse to pay are threatened with being denied some administrative services. For example, in Buyenzi zone of Bujumbura, people who cannot show a receipt for payment of this contribution are denied access to sugar, even if they have the household book and money to buy it, a rare product in Burundi. Similarly, in some quarters such as Kinama and Kamenge,

people without a receipt are denied access to public tap water.

### **Water shortage in Cibitoke urban center**

Information received by Ligue Iteka on September 9, 2024 indicates that water is seriously lacking in Cibitoke province city. Since August 27, 2024, not a drop has been noticed in most of taps in Cibitoke urban center. The population fears the resurgence of dirty-hand diseases in a context marked by monkey-pox. REGIDESO speaks of the expansion of the city where water needs are rising.

The situation has become untenable and residents, according to various concordant sources, are forced to travel several kilometers to obtain a few liters of drinking water in Cibitoke province city. Queues are visible everywhere in front of a few public taps that are still operational.

Bicycle taxis with empty cans wander everywhere hopelessly in search of water. A local source indicates that water is greatly lacking that there has been a general price rise of a 20-liter can, which has gone from 500 Bif to over 700 Bif or more. The same source reports that everywhere in homes, water for household work such as cleaning houses, laundry and cooking is lacking. The severe water shortage is also felt in workplaces and through health facilities.

For the latter case, the services of Cibitoke hospital are suffering greatly from the lack of drinking water. Hygiene is poor in the operating room, maternity and pediatrics. According to one of the nursing staff, all internal medicine services are facing a growing deficit of drinking water.

A young doctor does not hide his concerns. According to him, the current shortage of drinking water is making an already harmful situation worse following the new outbreak of monkeypox. For him, this epidemic, the prevention of which requires hand washing and the cleanliness of public places, could be aggravated by this drinking water challenge. The risk of spreading monkeypox is highlighted by a public health specialist who adds that the inhabitants of Cibitoke center, particularly in Rugombo commune, are currently using very dirty water from Nyamagana, Nyakagunda and Rusizi rivers.

In addition, he insists, these streams used for irrigating rice-growing areas contain chemical substances harmful to human health. Offices with sit-down toilets give off a nauseating odor. The occupants and various beneficiaries no longer go to such places marked by dirt following this severe lack of drinking water. Faced with all these problems, the administration seems overwhelmed by events. REGIDESO, through Georges Icintije, head of Cibitoke branch, acknowledges the facts. For his part, the drying up of most public fountains is due to this long dry season period.

Moreover, he continues, the extension of Cibitoke center and several houses built in the surrounding area mean that the need for drinking water is growing. Georges Icintije indicates that to remedy this, new water sources are being developed before calling on the population to properly maintain the existing hydraulic infrastructures.

To conclude, a state official established for more than a decade in Cibitoke criticizes the work of REGIDESO which, according to him, lacks technical expertise and financial means both to purchase new equipment and maintain the old installations.

### **A person kicked out of a bar based on the contribution to the elections in Busoni commune, Kirundo province**

Information received by Ligue Iteka on September 2, 2024 indicates that on August 29, 2024, on Kibonde hill, Busoni commune, Kirundo province, Silas Majambere, a member of UPRONA party and a teacher at ECOFO Rubuga1 was denied access to a bar of the said center. According to witnesses, he had just come from his friend's wedding and while passing by, he wanted to have some beer but when he entered the bar, he was asked for a receipt for the contribution for the elections. Responding that he did not know what going on, he was told that beer is reserved for the only contributors. He left the bar without receiving the beer he was looking for.



### **Crop fields burned in Bugabira commune, Kirundo province**

Information received by Ligue Iteka on September 2, 2024 indicates that on the night of August 28, 2024, on Soserwa sub-hill, Nyakarama hill, Kiyonza zone, Bugabira commune, Kirundo province, a 1.5 hectare banana plantation belonging to Jean Marie Vianney Hakizimana, member and leader of CNDD-FDD party veterans of the said hill, was burned by persons not yet identified. According to witnesses, during the collection of CNDD-FDD party contribution for the next elections, he took the lead and intimidated those who did not respond positively to his call. Investigations were carried out by Ndayishimiye Jérémie, Prosper, communal commissioner, one of the OPJ but resulted to nothing. Additional information indicates that the victim is often involved in beating up thieves and other criminals in the said zone.

### **Forced contributions in Bururi commune and province**

On September 5, 2024, young Imbonerakure including the Bururi city quarter head Régis Karim Abdoul Irakoze demanded that residents of this city first show CNDD-FDD party receipt to receive one kg of sugar. According to eyewitnesses, the distribution of this product took place in front of the offices of Bururi communal education direction. Some contributed on site to have the right to buy 1kg of sugar.

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

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

#### **A newborn killed in Kayogoro commune, Makamba province**

Information received by Ligue Iteka on September 2, 2024 indicates that on September 1, 2024, on Mugeni hill, Kayogoro commune, Makamba province, Gloriose Ntirampeba, aged 35, gave birth to a baby then threw it into a latrine and threw stones into the latrine to finish it off. According to witnesses on site, her husband left for the Democratic Republic of Congo to look for work and has not returned for over a year. According to the same witnesses, Gloriose Ntirampeba threw the child into a latrine since she was impregnated by a man who is not her husband. The body of this newborn was removed from the latrine around the afternoon. The alleged perpetrator was arrested the same day and taken to the communal police station cell in Kayogoro and then transferred to the provincial police station cell in Makamba on September 5, 2024.

#### **Two girls victims of human trafficking in Bugarama commune, Rumonge province**

On September 8, 2024, Ligue Iteka received information that, on September 2, 2024, two sisters, Cynthia Irankunda, 16, and Nadine Iteriteka, 14, from Makombe sub-hill, Mugendo hill, Bugarama commune, Rumonge province, were victims of human trafficking. They were found in Mugina, Mabanda commune, on the Tanzanian border, while they were waiting and trying to contact Jacqueline, the trafficker who was to take them to Tanzania. According to the victims, Jacqueline, known for her involvement in child trafficking, did not come to meet them for fear of being arrested by the administration. With the help of leaders and the administration, the children were returned to their hill, commune and province of origin. Upon arrival in Bugarama, the police first arrested them with Jacqueline Kabura and their mother, Odile Ntamavukiro for investigations. Jacqueline Kabura, a CNDD-FDD party member and recruiter, confessed to having taken the children with their parents' permission, but took advantage of their vulnerability to send them to Tanzania to work as domestic workers, which the parents accepted. The three were detained for exposing the children to trafficking. The children returned home on September 3, 2024.

#### **Four children victims of human trafficking found in Muhanga commune, Kayanza province.**

Information received by Ligue Iteka on September 8, 2024 indicates that on August 28, 2024, around 4 p.m., on Kibimba hill, Muhanga commune, Kayanza province, under the order of Benoît Ndayizeye, administrator of Muhanga commune, the joint security committee searched the house of Emmanuel

Ndacayisaba, aged 28, and found 4 children there, Akimana Derrick, aged 13, son of Épisode Mba-honankwa and Suzane Manirakiza, Iranezereza Kevin, aged 14, son of Chadrack Nimbona and Odette Ndayiragije, Denis Iteriteka aged 13, orphans, raised by his grandfather Nyabenda and Fabrice Nsen-giyumva, aged 16, orphan who lives with his older brother Philippe Bikorimana. According to an eyewitness, the four children were recruited by Ezekiel Habiyaambere aged 23, by fooling these children that he was going to give them a job for a lot of money then took them to Kibimba hill to Emmanuel's house and in turn, Emmanuel should send them to Tanzania to a boss who should have given them job.

On 28 August 2024, the children's parents filed a complaint with the administration of having lost their children. According to these parents, they had suspicions that Ezekiel was recruiting children to bring them to Tanzania but without evidence. It was a neighbor of these parents who said that the day before, he saw one of these children being with Ezekiel.

The joint security committee called Ezekiel. He then said that the children are on the other Kibimba hill preparing to leave for Tanzania at night.

The joint security committee went to Emmanuel's house and found the 4 children there. The parents returned their children home and the alleged perpetrators of this trafficking are now at Kayanza province police station.

## ***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 demands:

- ⇒ To the Minister of Justice to ensure compliance with the law against the perpetrators of crimes.
- ⇒ To the Minister of the Interior, Community Development and Public Security to inclusively guarantee public rights and freedoms to all Burundian citizens.