

## **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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under the reference number OBS.236 and is a member of ECOSOC. Ligue Iteka is decentralized into 17 federations and 32 sections"

### ***REPORT OF THE BURUNDIAN HUMAN RIGHTS LEAGUE "ITEKA" ON THE SITUATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN BURUNDI DURING THE MONTH OF SEPTEMBER 2024***



***In memory of Madam Marie Claudette Kwizera, Treasurer of Iteka, reported missing since December 10 2015. From December 2015 to 30 September 2024, Iteka has documented at least 706 cases of enforced disappearances.***

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## **ACRONYMS**

<b>CNDD-FDD</b>	: <i>National Council for the Defense of Democracy - Front for the Defense of Democracy</i>
<b>CNL</b>	: <i>National Council for Liberty</i>
<b>DESC</b>	: <i>Economic, Social and Cultural Rights</i>
<b>FRODEBU</b>	: <i>Front for Democracy in Burundi</i>
<b>MSD</b>	: <i>Movement for Solidarity and Democracy</i>
<b>PNB</b>	: <i>National Police of Burundi</i>
<b>SGBV</b>	: <i>Sexual and Gender-Based Violence</i>
<b>SNR</b>	: <i>National Intelligence Service</i>
<b>SOSUMO</b>	: <i>Moso Sugar Plant</i>
<b>TGI</b>	: <i>High Court</i>
<b>UNGA</b>	: <i>United Nations General Assembly</i>
<b>UPRONA</b>	: <i>Union for National Progress</i>

## 0. INTRODUCTION

This monthly report for September 2024 is a condensed version of the weekly Iteka n'Ijambo bulletins from numbers 438 to 441. This report covers the political, economic, judicial, governance, human rights, diplomacy and security contexts that marked this period. It also reviews civil and political rights, economic and socio-cultural rights, and categorical rights. This report finally ends with a conclusion and recommendations.

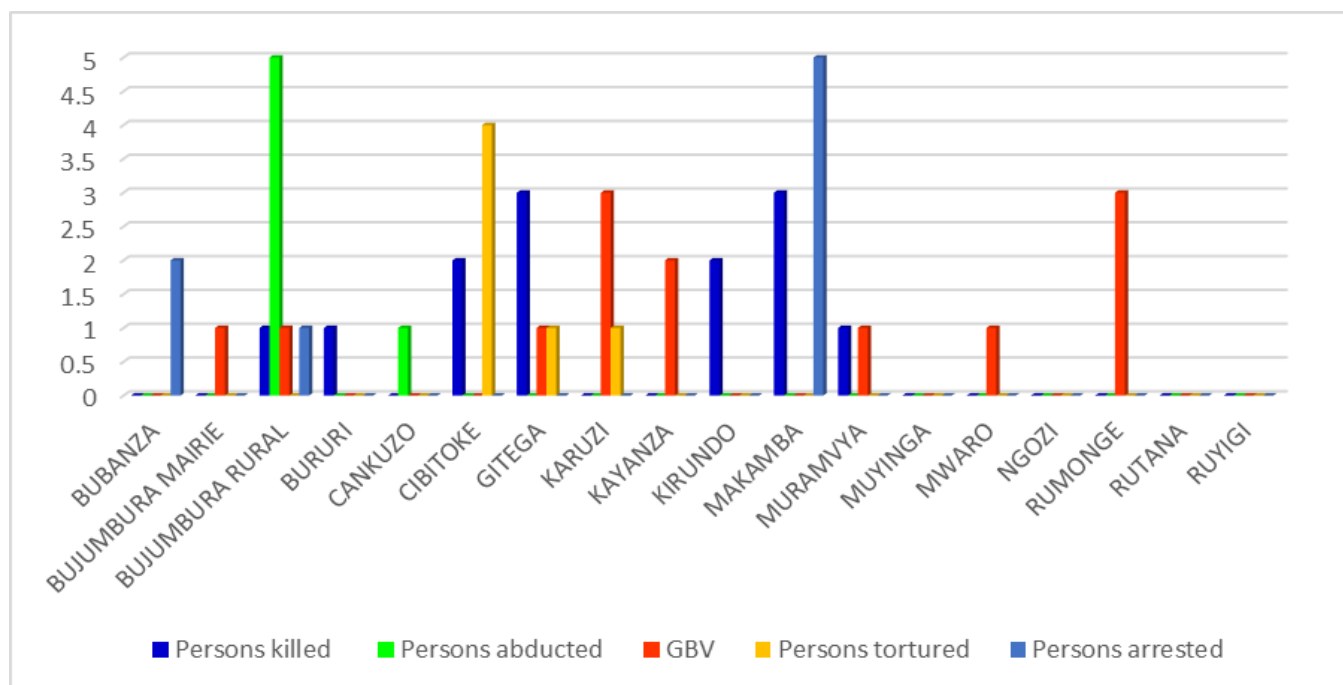
Thus, the human rights situation was reported as follows: at least 13 people killed, including 7 bodies found and 1 person victim of summary execution, 13 victims of GBV, 6 people abducted and/or missing, 6 people tortured and 8 people arbitrarily arrested.

Among the victims are 94 persons, including 60 minor children who are victims of human trafficking. Among the victims are 2 children killed, including 1 newborn killed, 1 woman killed and 4 women arbitrarily arrested. Members of political parties were not spared either. A member of CNDD FDD party and two members of CNL party were arbitrarily arrested, three members of the CNDD-FDD party were killed as well as two members of CNL party arbitrarily arrested. A member of CNDD FDD party was killed, 4 members of CDP party and a member of CNDD-FDD party were tortured as well as 5 members of MSD party and a member of CNL party abducted and/or reported missing.

Imbonerakure, administrators, police officers and SNR agents are singled out as being the alleged perpetrators of most of these human rights violations and murders.

### 0.1. Mapping of incidents and distribution per alleged perpetrators

**Figure 1: Graph illustrating the main cases of the human rights situation observed in Burundi in September 2024**



The highest number of people killed was recorded in Makamba and Gitega provinces with 3 cases each, followed by Cibitoke and Kirundo provinces with 2 each.

The alleged perpetrators of these killings include unidentified people with 7 cases and police officers with 1 case. Three cases of people killed following security incidents were noted, 1 person killed following a settling of scores and 1 case of infanticide.

During the reporting period, 13 cases of GBV were observed in Karuzi and Rumonge provinces with 3 cases each.

Six cases of torture were recorded in Cibitoke provinces with 4 as well as Gitega and Karuzi provinces with 1 case each. The alleged perpetrators of these acts of torture are Imbonerakure, police officers and administrators.

Out of a total of 8 cases of arrests documented during this period, Makamba province comes first with 5 cases followed by Bubanza with 2 cases and Bujumbura rural with 1 case. The alleged perpetrators are police officers.

## I. CONTEXTE<sup>1</sup>

During the reporting period, contextual elements related to politics, economics, justice, governance, human rights and diplomacy marked the month of September :

**I.1. Concerning political context:** The context of this month was marked in Burundi, by the FRODE-BU party office in Mpanda, Bubanza province, which was destroyed on the night of September 9 to 10, 2024. Party leaders denounce political intolerance before the elections. In addition, the International Day of Peace was celebrated on September 21, 2024 in Buhumuza, with a parade and a football match. Participants emphasized the importance of peace and understanding between political parties.

**I.2. Concerning economy:** The context is marked by the announcement by SOSUMO of a steep increase in the price of sugar in Burundi, from 3,300 BIF to 8,000 BIF per kg, an increase of 242%. This decision is motivated by the liberalization of the sugar trade and the adjustment of prices to the practices of private traders. However, the President of the Republic, Evariste Ndayishimiye, opposed this increase, considering that SOSUMO does not bring any added value to the country and seeks to enrich its leaders at the expense of the population.

The consequences of this increase will be multiple: (i) Negative economic impact on already precarious households (ii). Increase in the prices of derivative products such as bread and drinks using sugar (iii) Worsening of the economic situation of households

It should be noted that this increase in the price of sugar is not isolated, as it is part of a context of global sugar price fluctuations.

**I.3. Justice context :** September was marked by several important judicial events in Burundi:

- ◇ The case of Dr. Christophe Sahabo: Dr. Christophe Sahabo, former Director General of Kira Hospital, appeared before the High Court of Muha in Bujumbura on September 9, 2024, despite his fragile health. His trial was suspended after he lost consciousness and was admitted to hospital, but his treatment was interrupted to be taken back to Ruyigi prison;
- ◇ Flagrancy trial in Ruyigi: Emmanuel Bucumi was sentenced to 40 years in prison and fined 1,000,000 BIF for inciting his son to burn Mpungwe Mountain;
- ◇ Conviction of two soldiers in Bururi: Arakaza Aristide and Bigirimana Alexandre were sentenced to life imprisonment for the assassination of Éric Ndayizeye, a motorcycle taxi driver;
- ◇ Acquittal of three judges: The three judges of TGI Bururi, Léonard Nizigiyimana, Irène Mukeshimana and Antoine Ngendakumana, were acquitted by the Supreme Court, but remain in prison.

<sup>1</sup><https://ligue-iteka.bi>

- ◇ Poor detention conditions in Makamba: 24 people, including 20 women and 4 children, are subjected to deplorable detention conditions at Makamba prosecutor's office due to prison overcrowding.

These events raise concerns about respect for human rights and justice in Burundi.

***1.4. On governance level:*** The Burundian government restricted the use of the Laissez-Passer for travel to Tanzania, limiting travel to 6 kilometers from the border. A road accident killed one Imbonerakure and injured ten others in Nyanza-lac.

Regulations on religious organizations came into force, raising concerns about freedom of religion. Deplorable prison conditions were reported at Cibitoke police station. A mountain caught fire in Ruyigi, and a 14-year-old boy and his father were arrested. A police officer was arrested for stealing fuel from a gas station in Rugombo. Intimidation was reported in Bururi, where the communal administrator, Félix Niyongabo, ordered the Imbonerakure to rope Honoré, communal secretary of Sahwanya FRODEBU party, after he had raised awareness among the population against the forced contributions demanded by the ruling party.

In Cibitoke, magistrates released 48 detainees, including 10 minors, to relieve overcrowding in the cell. Residents welcomed the decision, but called for delays in legal proceedings to be resolved quickly.

***1.5. Human rights context:*** September was marked by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on human rights in Burundi, Fortuné Gaetan Zongo, who presented his report on 23 September 2024, in which he denounces persistent human rights violations, including extrajudicial executions, enforced disappearances and torture. The report also highlights the impunity of the perpetrators and the lack of cooperation from the Burundian government. The Special Rapporteur calls on the international community to maintain close monitoring of the situation.

***1.6. On the diplomatic level,*** the period was marked by Burundi's participation in the 79<sup>th</sup> session of the United Nations General Assembly through Ambassador Albert Shingiro, Burundian Minister of Foreign Affairs. In his speech, he reaffirmed Burundi's commitment to effective and inclusive multilateralism, and called for reform of the Security Council, including a permanent seat for Africa. He also held bilateral meetings with foreign ministers to strengthen diplomatic relations.

## ***1.7. SECURITY CONTEXT***

During the reporting period, as the graph below illustrates, Ligue Iteka has documented at least 13 people killed, including 7 bodies found. Among these victims, 3 people were killed following security incidents, 1 person was killed following the settling of scores, 1 case of infanticide and 7 people were killed by unidentified people.

## II. CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS

Burundi is a party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1965) and its optional protocol (1976) without reservation on May 9, 1990. As part of its implementation, Burundi has taken measures in domestic legislation, namely in its Constitution of June 7, 2018 (main law), article 19 that guarantees that all rights proclaimed and guaranteed by regularly ratified international texts are an integral part of this Constitution, implementing texts have been put in place, namely the penal code of December 29, 2017 and the penal 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, article 21 of the country's constitutional law, as for the facts observed and proven, political will overrides it.

During the reporting period, Ligue Iteka recorded at least 1 person killed by State agents. The perpetrators of these killings were police officers. This victim was recorded in Gitega province.

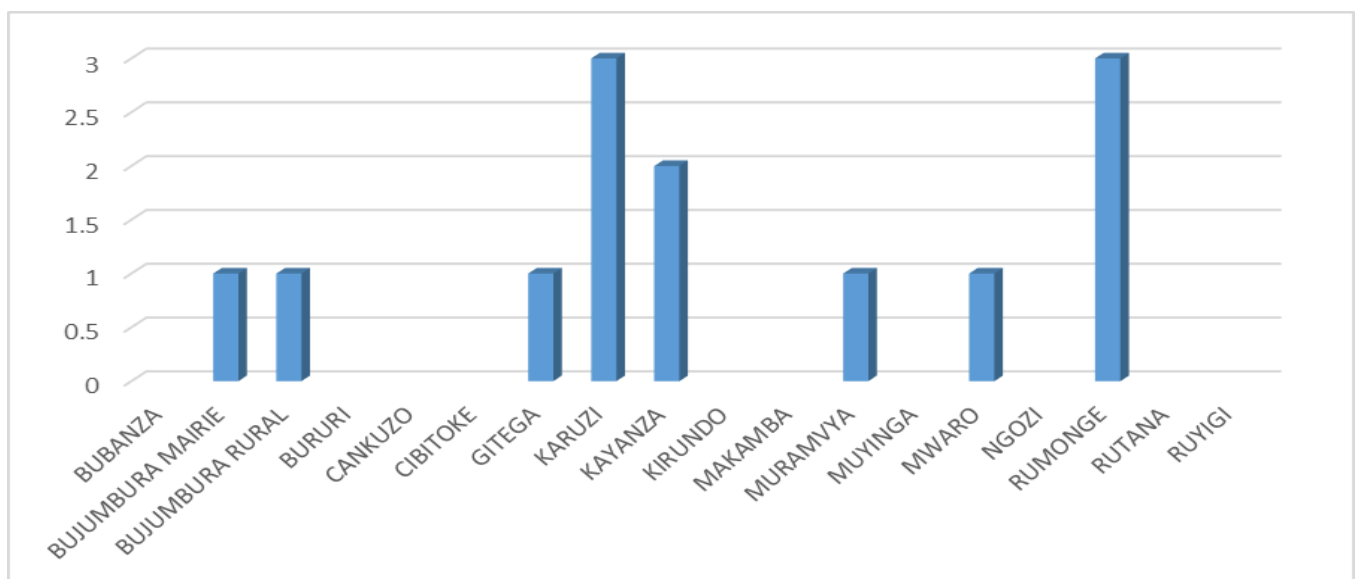
### II.2. RIGHT TO PHYSICAL INTEGRITY

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

The Law on Gender-Based Violence adopted in Burundi in 2016 was a major step forward. It has guaranteed better protection, namely by defining rape that takes into account the issue of consent and by prohibiting harmful traditional practices. However, cases of GBV are observed at an acute rate.

During the reporting period, Ligue Iteka recorded at least 13 victims of gender-based violence. The provinces of Rumonge and Karuzi lead with 3 cases each.

**Figure 2 : Graph of persons victims of gender based violence**



#### II.2.2. TORTURE

During the reporting period, Ligue Iteka recorded at least 6 people tortured. The alleged perpetrators of these cases are Imbonerakure, SNR agents and administrative officials. These cases were recorded in the provinces of Cibitoke, Gitega and Karuzi.



**II.3. RIGHT TO FREEDOM**

**II.3.1. PERSONS ABDUCTED/MISSING**

The Constitutional Law of Burundi guarantees in its Article 38, to every individual, the benefit of a fair trial and that his case is heard and judged within a reasonable time. However, on the ground, alarming irregularities in this aspect are noted.

In September 2024, Ligue Iteka documented at least 6 people abducted and/or missing in the provinces of Bujumbura rural and Cankuzo. The alleged perpetrators of these kidnappings are SNR agents with 5 cases and administrative officials with 1 case.

**II.3.2. ARBITRARY ARRESTS**

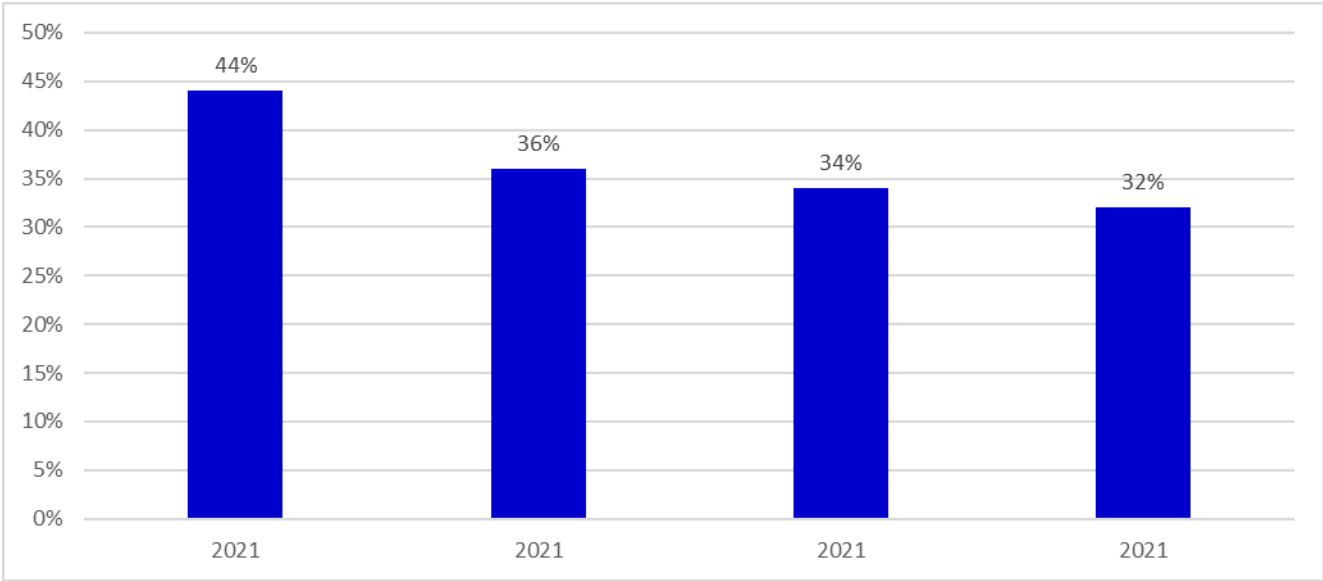
International and national texts in Burundi recognize the principle of innocence until proven guilty, and that detention is an exception.

During the reporting period, Ligue Iteka registered at least 8 people arbitrarily arrested. The police were the alleged perpetrators of these arrests. The victims were recorded in the provinces of Majamba with 5 cases, Bubanza with 2 cases and Bujumbura Rural with 1 case.

**II.4. RIGHT TO EDUCATION**

During the reporting period, Ligue Iteka has monitored and reported the situation of decline of the quality of school education in Burundi according to the Burundi Ministry of National Education and Scientific Research who announced on September 2, 2024, a minimum score for entry into post-basic education, while students admitted to boarding schools must obtain 50.5%. This decision raises concerns about the quality of education, as the minimum score has declined since 2021. Students admitted with low scores risk not being prepared for the requirements of the post-basic curriculum, which could lead to inequalities, academic failure, and higher dropout rates.

Since 2021, the minimum score for access to post-basic education has continued to decline, as illustrated in the graph below.





This decision could also create additional challenges for teachers, who will have to harmonize the proficiency levels of students in their classes. Burundi's Vision 2040-2060, which aims to transform the country into an emerging nation, seems hypothetical in the field of education<sup>2</sup>.

To remedy this, the government should review admission criteria and hold regular consultations with teachers, parents and students to adjust education policies. This would ensure quality and inclusive education, essential for the development of an active and intelligent youth, the future pillar of the country's growth.

### ***III. ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS***

During the month of September, Ligue Iteka noted facts constituting violations of ESCR in Burundi :

Burundi is experiencing numerous violations of economic, social and cultural rights (ESCR), particularly with regard to access to essential goods and services such as fuel, water, health care and education. Cases of embezzlement of public funds, corruption and interference by the administration and officials of the ruling party in the fuel and cement trade have been reported in several provinces.

Residents are also subjected to forced contributions to finance the election campaign of the ruling party and the 2025 and 2027 elections, with threats of sanctions for those who refuse.

ESCR violations particularly affect vulnerable populations, including women, the elderly and people with disabilities.

The Burundian authorities must take measures to ensure equitable access to essential goods and services and put an end to practices of corruption and embezzlement of public funds.

It is also important to protect the rights of vulnerable populations and ensure their access to basic services such as education, health care and clean water.

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

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

The International Convention on the Rights of the Child, which Burundi ratified on October 19, 1990, guarantees children the right to protection from violence, maltreatment and all forms of abuse and exploitation. Article 44 of the Burundian constitution also stipulates that "every child has the right to special measures to ensure or improve the care necessary for his well-being, health and physical safety, and to be protected against ill-treatment, abuse or exploitation".

Despite these guarantees, during the reporting period, Ligue Iteka recorded at least 2 children killed including one newborn killed and sixty minor children victims of human trafficking.

#### ***IV.2. WOMEN'S RIGHTS***

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women was adopted by the UNGA on December 18, 1979 and around a hundred countries ratified it in 1990, including Burundi on January 8, 1992.

During the reporting period, Ligue Iteka recorded at least 1 woman killed and 4 women arbitrarily arrested.

<sup>2</sup><https://vision-burundi.gov.bi/>

## ***V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMANDATIONS***

During this reporting period, the deterioration of the human rights situation continued to be observed across the country.

This report highlights cases of violations of the right to life; physical integrity and freedom; economic, social and cultural rights, as well as categorical rights.

This report also lists issues related to security incidents as well as the context prevailing in the country.

In this report, Ligue Iteka also reviews the major events that marked the political, economic, judicial, governance, human rights and diplomatic as well as security contexts that marked this period. It also reviews civil and political rights and economic and socio-cultural rights and categorical rights. Ligue Iteka protests against the impunity of the crimes observed.

Considering the situation of human rights violations in Burundi that continues, Ligue Iteka recommends the following :

- ◆ **To the Government of Burundi and in particular the Burundian Minister of Justice and the Ministers of the Environment, Water, Energy, Hygiene and Sanitation,**
  - ⇒ Strengthen the independence and impartiality of justice to ensure fair trials and put an end to impunity;
  - ⇒ To fight against impunity by bringing to justice all alleged perpetrators of crimes; to rehabilitate in their rights all victims of human rights violations observed;
  - ⇒ Guarantee equitable access to essential goods and services such as water, health care and education.
- ◆ **To the Minister of the Interior, Security and Community Development**
  - ⇒ To guarantee public rights and freedoms for all; to preserve peace and security for all;
  - ⇒ Guarantee freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly;
  - ⇒ Strengthen democratic institutions and guarantee free and transparent elections.
- ◆ **To the European Union and countries accredited to Burundi**
  - ⇒ Recall the commitment of the Burundian government, political actors, civil society and the international community to improve the human rights situation in Burundi;
  - ⇒ To use its influence to force the Burundian government restore a democratic and rule of law; to strengthen cooperation with international human rights organizations to ensure compliance with Burundi's international commitments;
  - ⇒ To support human rights organizations, institutions and mechanisms operating in Burundi.