

BURUNDIAN LIGUE OF HUMAN RIGHTS "ITEKA"

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Weekly bulletin « ITEKA N'IJAMBO » n°443 of the Burundian Ligue of Human Rights "ITEKA"

Week from 7-13 october 2024



In memory of Madam Marie Claudette Kwizera, Treasurer of Iteka, reported missing since December 10 2015. From December 2015 to 13 October 2024, Iteka has documented at least 708 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>
DCE	: <i>Communal Directorate of Education</i>
DPE	: <i>Provincial Direction of Education</i>
DRC	: <i>Democratic Republic of Congo</i>
ECOFO	: <i>Fundamental School</i>
FAB	: <i>Armed Forces of Burundi</i>
FDLR	: <i>Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda</i>
FDN	: <i>Burundi National Defense Force</i>
FLN	: <i>National Liberation Front</i>
FNL	: <i>National Liberation Forces</i>
GBV	: <i>Gender Based Violence</i>
OPJ	: <i>Judiciary Police Officer</i>
OTB	: <i>Burundi Tea Plant</i>
PJ	: <i>Judiciary Police</i>
SNR	: <i>Intelligence Service at the service</i>
TGI	: <i>High Court</i>

0. INTRODUCTION

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

Therefore, during this reporting period of this bulletin, the human rights and security situation was reported as follows: at least 9 people killed, including 2 found dead and 3 victims of summary executions, 6 victims of GBV, 2 people tortured, 3 people abducted and one person arbitrarily arrested.

Among the victims are 1 woman and 2 newborns killed, a member of CNL party and 1 priest tortured, 1 minor arbitrarily arrested and 4 children victims of human trafficking.

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

1. HUMAN RIGHTS, JUDICIAL, GOVERNANCE AND SECURITY CONTEXT

1.1. HUMAN RIGHTS CONTEXT

Renewal of the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on Burundi.

The United Nations Human Rights Council, meeting in Geneva, renewed on 10 October 2024 the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Burundi, Fortuné Gaétan Zongo. Following the vote that renewed the mandate of the Special Rapporteur, 22 countries voted for the renewal, 10 voted against while 15 countries abstained. This renewal of the mandate of the Special Rapporteur confirms that the human rights situation in Burundi remains worrying and requires continued vigilance from the international community.

In his report presented on 23 September 2024, during the 57th session of the United Nations Human Rights Council, the Special Rapporteur highlighted the persistent human rights violations in Burundi, including extrajudicial executions, enforced disappearances, arbitrary arrests and detentions, and torture.

In addition, with a view to informing the Burundian and international community about the persistence of human rights violations in Burundi, Ligue Iteka produced, in September 2024, a report¹ assessing four years and two months of President Evariste Ndayishimiye's regime. In this report, serious violations of human rights are noted, in particular civil and political rights with 2,436 people killed, 535 victims of GBV, 261 victims of torture, 183 victims of abductions and/or enforced disappearances, and 2,676 people arbitrarily arrested. The renewal of the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on Burundi highlights the continued concern about human rights violations in the country, particularly in the run-up to the 2025 legislative and communal elections.

In the absence of other credible mechanisms for monitoring the human rights situation, the Special Rapporteur is one of the independent mechanisms capable of monitoring and reporting on human rights violations in Burundi.

It should be noted that this renewal follows advocacy actions by Burundian and international civil society organizations for the renewal of the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Burundi.

¹<https://ligue-iteka.bi/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/RAPPORT-4-ANS-ET-2-MOIS-DU-PRESIDENT-EVARISTE-NDAYISHIMIYE.pdf>

1.2. JUSTICE CONTEXT

A SNR official arrested in Cibitoke province

On October 11, 2024, Felix Havyarimana, head of SNR in Cibitoke province, was arrested by his colleagues from Bujumbura with an arrest warrant from Bujumbura public prosecutor's office and taken manu militari to the SNR cell in Bujumbura mairie.

According to police witnesses, Felix was accused of swindling 75,000,000 BIF from Paul Icoyitije, a gold trader. According to a security source, Paul Icoyitije was each time accused of being an enemy of the country by the head of SNR in Cibitoke province who accused him of selling gold bars to Rwanda.

Paul Icoyitije, threatened to be killed each time by the head of intelligence in Cibitoke, had to forcibly sign an acknowledgement followed by the release of this amount of money to avoid being killed. According to a police officer in Cibitoke, scared, he referred to the hierarchical authorities of the intelligence services who immediately intervened.

Cited many times in cases of assassination and abduction, some inhabitants of Cibitoke contacted on this subject welcome this arrest and demand that this former head of SNR in Cibitoke province be punished and judged in accordance with the law.

Judgment rendered at Kayanza High Court

On October 7, 2024, the Kayanza High Court (TGI) rendered its verdict in the case of Béatrice Yamuremye, from Gahise hill, Butaganzwa commune, Kayanza province. She was sentenced to five years in prison, as well as a fine of 100,000 Burundian francs and moral compensation of 1,000,000 Burundian francs.

Béatrice Yamuremye was accused of the murder of her husband, who was killed with a pestle on the night of September 24 to 25, 2024. However, she pleaded not guilty, claiming that the victim died after being hit by a brick during a fight between them.

Boniface Nduwimana, representative of the Association of Men in Distress, a human rights organization, expressed his dissatisfaction with the verdict. According to him, if a man were accused of the same crime, he would face a life sentence, thus highlighting a disparity in justice.

1.3. GOVERNANCE CONTEXT

Field trip of the CNDD-FDD party secretary in Kirundo province

According to information received by Ligue Iteka on October 8, 2024, Révérien Ndikuriyo, national secretary of CNDD-FDD party, toured all the communes of Kirundo province from October 2 to 5, 2024. During this visit, he gathered local party leaders and representatives of the Imbonerakure at the border between Rwanda and Burundi.

Eyewitnesses affirm that the objective of this visit was to prepare the Imbonerakure for the upcoming elections in order to target and neutralize opponents. At the end of each meeting, Ndikuriyo reportedly selected five Imbonerakure members per hill to instruct them on how to target the enemy.

Révérien Ndikuriyo is a prominent political figure in Burundi, having served as President of the Senate from 2015 to 2020 and currently serving as the Secretary General of CNDD-FDD party since 2021.

More than 100 households facing eviction from their land in Rugombo commune, Cibitoke province.

Since October 8, 2024, Burundian administrative, military, and police authorities have launched an expropriation campaign against 110 households in the locality of Kibuku, in Cibitoke province. These families have been cultivating 80 hectares of land for years, bordering Rusizi River, on the border with the DRC.

The authorities seemingly aim to confiscate this land to allocate it to CNDD-FDD party dignitaries. However, farmers have owned these lands for generations, as an octogenarian testifies. About fifty women have already demonstrated their anger on site.

Police officers, led by the governor of Cibitoke and accompanied by Imbonerakure, were deployed to prohibit all agricultural activity. This operation was repeated in early October 2024 in several localities in the communes of Rugombo, Buganda, Mabayi and Bukinanyana, including the localities of Mbaza-Miduha, Gatoki, Ryabigabo, Ruhagarika, Murambi, Buhoro and Ndora.

According to witnesses, the country's senior authorities, including the Prime Minister, are allegedly involved in this affair, seeking to acquire pastures for their herds. The victims are in a state of total disarray, while justice seems to remain inactive.

The governor of Cibitoke tried to reassure the population by speaking of public domain and stating that not everyone can obtain temporary authorization to carry out agricultural activities there.

1.4. SECURITY CONTEXT

1.4.1. FDLR REBELS HOSTED IN BURUNDI

Who controls the Mabayi and Bukinanyana communes of Cibitoke province: FDLR and FLN or FDN?

From Pierre Nkurunziza's second term to August 2023, the issue of the Rwandan rebels of FLN and FDLR has been one of the daily topics in Mabayi and Bukinanyana communes. In Kibira where they are positioned, they had preferred Mabayi hills because they are closer to Rwanda where they have repeatedly launched attacks to retreat to Burundi.

In Mabayi as in Bukinanyana, these rebels who almost cohabited with the FDN military positions and the population, their presence was for many people the opportunity to make money during the exchanges they had with these rebels (they were supplied from the population and used civilians to obtain everything they needed).

The foreign currency they earned from their exchanges with CNDD-FDD regime (trafficking in gold and arms), was a source of wealth for some.

For others, they were a source of misfortune for the hills of Bumba and Nderama in Bukinanyana commune and the hills of Gasebeyi, Kibande, Mukoma, Gafumbegeti and Rutorero in Mabayi commune during the looting they carried out and the fighting with the army during which innocent civilians were victims as well as some assassinations they perpetrated like that of Maisha, the former secretary of Imbonerakure in Mabayi in August 2023.

After the death of Adolphe Nshimirimana and Pierre Nkurunziza, General Bunyoni was their only protector. The latter, for political reasons and his position, maintained contact only with their leaders who had taken up residence in Cibitoke, Kajaga, Kigobe and Kabondo. The one who was closer to these rebels in the field and in their trafficking was General Godefroid Bizimana at first for a long time and then

Innocent Museremu in a short second time.

As these officers have gradually lost their influence since the death of President Nkurunziza, General Ndirakobuca, Minister of the Interior at the time, had forged close relations with these rebels who had also lost their influence in the DRC where their influential leaders in the arms and mineral trade as a source of income for these rebels. This is how with Gervais Ndirakobuca, a trade that would be like a means of survival and stability in the country for the rebels was engaged. Tons of coltan, kilos of gold extracted from Kibira and in a part of Bukinanyana are sold in Rwanda and in return they import cows and besides that, the rebels take advantage to obtain weapons via the DRC.

For a long time, several people in Mabayi have entered into relations with these rebels. From local administrators to gold miners through simple food merchants, several have become millionaires. They had taken advantage of the double arrest of Denis Uwimana, brother of General Godefroid Bizimana who ensured the supplies of these rebels. Having become numerous and rich at the same time, conflicts of interest arose in 2023 and in less than 10 days, soldiers and police officers including three officers were assassinated during a clash in Kivogero on August 3 and the assassination of an Imbonerakure leader on August 9, 2023.

Ndakugarika was aware of these trade exchanges but as he was sure to benefit much more than the others, he had never thought that these exchanges could cause tangible proof of the presence of Rwandan rebels on Burundian soil. The two deadly incidents have again reaffirmed the presence of these rebels on Burundian soil, a presence that the current regime with Ndakugarika as Prime Minister had always denied.

After a security meeting organized by Ndakugarika at Mabayi Parish a month after the two incidents, he promised that if a Rwandan rebel is apprehended in Mabayi, it will be the fault of the population and the rest will be a deadly war. Since then, all the rebels have settled in Bukinanyana. A hundred of their collaborators, the majority of whom are CNDD-FDD influential members, are then massively arrested on the orders of Ndakugarika. Imprisoned in Mpimba and in different SNR cells, some were tortured, Matwi executed, they were released one by one and until now, only three are still languishing in Mpimba including the former administrator of Mabayi Nicodème Ndashabonyimana.

For almost a year, no presence, no incident of the rebels was reported and it is during this period of calm never observed in Mabayi for more than 10 years that the SNR and CNDD-FDD members led a nasty hunt for the opponents members of CNL, some abducted without trace, one assassinated. Among the accusations against these victims is the collaboration with these rebels, accusations which have sown confusion among the inhabitants of Mabayi.

By moving to Bukinanyana it was a way to camouflage the presence of the rebels in the country. The people of Bukinanyana being loyal to Ndakugarika they are always ready to keep the secret, (Si ibimenabanga) ... they do not like money like those of Mabayi he describes as ibimenabanga and abakunzi b'inda (indiscreet and corrupt).

Consequently, he can always comfortably conduct his business without disturbance. Another thing, in the past, the people who had been arrested for collaboration with the rebels, they denounced their bosses.

Bukinanyana being very far from the Rwandan borders because of the immensity of part of Kibira and Nyungwe, these rebels began to return to Mabayi. From this side, they can easily enter into Rwanda, loot in households and return. Thus, since September 20, 2024, the Rwandan armed forces have reinforced their positions at the line separating the two countries after a group of rebels tried to infiltrate Rwanda and after the failure retreated to Burundi. Thus, several military positions as well as their leaders were transferred during the week of September 23-27, 2024.

The positions that have large numbers of men from FAB and FNL are the most transferred. The military leaders of these two origins always remain at Mabayi camp and at the military position of OTB Buhoro. The military leaders from CNDD are those who often go to the field in Kibira.

With the situation in South Kivu, Ndayishimiye Evariste's regime would undoubtedly need these rebels whose main bases and main commanders are based in the DRC, hence the need to provide them with protection on Burundian soil. And to facilitate their movements, they need the 36km Mabayi-Rugombo axis. With this axis, it only takes an hour to arrive on Congolese soil. Military vehicles and those of SNR circulate at night on this axis and sources inform that on board are people who are used to disembarking at Mparambo from Rugombo zone to often enter into DRC with an escort.

1.4.2. PERSONS KILLED BY UNIDENTIFIED PEOPLE

A body found in Butezi commune, Ruyigi province

Information received by Ligue Iteka on 8 October 2024 indicates that on 2 October 2024, in a bush behind the Congolese refugee camp of Bwagiriza, on Bwagiriza hill and zone, Butezi commune, Ruyigi province, a body of an unidentified man, decapitated, was found next to the path on Buruhukiro hill.

According to an eyewitness, the victim is a Congolese refugee who was killed by his peers. He is allegedly accused of witchcraft by his Congolese fellow students in this camp. This decomposing body was directly buried on site by farmers who were going to their fields around 6 a.m. Two suspicious persons were arrested for investigation purposes.

A body found in Ruyigi commune and province

On the morning of October 7, 2024, around 6 a.m., on Buruhukiro hill, Rusengo zone, Ruyigi commune and province, a body of an unidentified man was found by farmers who were going to their fields. According to sources on site, Antoinette Semugara, the administrator of Ruyigi commune rushed to order the burial of the victim in collaboration with the Red Cross because the body had already started to decompose.

This person has not been identified in this locality, he was allegedly killed in another locality and dumped there.

A person killed in Buhiga commune, Karuzi province

On October 9, 2024, around 5 a.m., on Rwingoma hill, Buhiga zone and commune, Karuzi province, a woman named Olive, aged 50, from Gashanga hill, Bugenyuzi zone and commune was killed by unidentified people. According to witnesses on the scene, the victim was killed by unidentified people when she was going to the fields with corn seeds and a pot of food. According to witnesses, the victim was killed with machetes in the head, her right arm and left hand amputated upon arrival at Buhiga hospital.

She was in land disputes with her two brothers and she had won all the cases in the provincial courts. Until October 13, 2024, no one was arrested and the victim's family and neighbors buried her the same day.

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

II.1.1. PERSONS KILLED BY STATE AGENTS

II.1.1. 1. PERSONS KILLED BY SNR AGENTS

A person died in the SNR cell in Cibitoke province

On the night of October 6 to 7, 2024, the body of a man in his thirties was found lying in a pool of blood in the SNR cell in Cibitoke province city.

According to eyewitnesses, the victim was part of a team of 3 people brought back from Bujumbura Mairie and jailed in SNR cells since the evening of October 4, 2024. According to the same source, the victim received several hammer blows before succumbing to his injuries.

The victim's body was taken out the next day, very early in the morning and taken to a location not yet known. Another security source specifies that the victims are suspected of being Red-Tabala rebels and who were arrested in Uvira city in the Democratic Republic of Congo before being brought back to Burundi under escort of SNR agents.

The two others dying and deprived of food are currently between life and death. Located very close to the residence of the Governor of Cibitoke, cries of distress from people under torture are often heard by passers-by. Some residents contacted and living not far from the SNR cell urge the Governor of Cibitoke and the police authorities to use their influence to save the lives of these 2 other people.

Three people died in the SNR cell in Cibitoke province

In a period not exceeding one week, three people died after being tortured by SNR police officers in Cibitoke province, accused of participating in the Red-Tabara rebel group.

The 2 young people under torture in the SNR jails in Cibitoke province died on the evening of October 9, 2024, while the first victim had died in the same conditions at the beginning of the week.

According to witnesses on site, the 2 corpses wrapped in a tent were taken out of the SNR office the same day around sunset and transported by the SNR head's vehicle to Nyamitanga locality in Buganda commune, where they were buried on Rusizi coast bordering the DRC. According to the same witness, the vehicle of the head of SNR Cibitoke was escorted by 2 police officers and 3 Imbonerakure who were in charge of their burial, which suggests a kind of summary execution.

As indicated by the inhabitants of the locality contacted, all unanimously point the finger at the head of SNR Cibitoke in several cases of abduction and assassination.

The governor of Cibitoke and the prosecutor of the public prosecutor's office at the TGI Cibitoke questioned on this question indicate that they are not aware of this information. These two administrative and judicial authorities call on anyone with information to contact competent authorities and file complaints.

The head of SNR, for his part, questioned on these 3 recent cases of assassination in less than a week where even his vehicle was seen transporting the bodies at night in the locality of Nyamitanga, prefers to say nothing.

Various concordant sources indicate that the hand of the head of SNR is cited in many cases of killings against members of opposition parties. These victims are accused of rebels against Gitega regime and had been arrested in Uvira city, in South Kivu in the DRC at the beginning of the month before being brought back to Burundi where they have just died after being tortured in SNR cells in Cibitoke.

Nsavyimana Jean Paul, prosecutor at the TGI Cibitoke and Carême Bizoza, Governor of Cibitoke province admit not having received any complainant.

The head of SNR in Cibitoke, during a security meeting on October 7, 2024, rejects all these accusations before indicating that the spokesperson at the national level should be approached for any questions concerning the SNR.

II.2. RIGHT TO PHYSICAL INTEGRITY

II.2.1. PERSONS TORTURED

A member of CNL party tortured in Bururi commune and province

Information received by Ligue Iteka on October 10, 2024 indicates that on September 28, 2024, Samuel Nibaruta, aged 24, a member of CNL party, from Mudahandwa hill, Bururi commune and province, was beaten up by Tony and Ferdinand, Imbonerakure and broke his arm.

According to sources on site, on October 7, 2024, Samuel was arrested by 4 police officers under the orders of the PJ commissioner, Police Colonel Ladislav, at the roundabout in front of the communal office and taken to the provincial police station cell in Bururi. He is accused of having denounced the Imbonerakure who had beaten him.

This young man wearing bloody clothes with a wound on his right arm above the elbow was lamenting loudly, deploring that the alleged perpetrators who stabbed him near Myugaro River on Mugozi hill and who had been arrested and taken to this cell on October 2, 2024 have been free since October 3, 2024.

A priest tortured in Mukaza commune, Bujumbura mairie

On October 4, 2024, around 8 p.m., Olivier Ndayikengurukiye, a priest, from Bujumbura province, Nyabiraba commune, Nyabiraba hill, was abducted by SNR agents when he was back in Kiriri in Mukaza commune in Bujumbura mairie where the congregation of missionary Fathers is located. This priest, a Missionary of Africa, was carrying out his evangelical mission in Mozambique. He had come to his native country to visit his family. According to an eyewitness, on the day of his abduction, he was back in Kiriri and had taken a taxi with registration plate KA0918. He was released on October 12, 2024, being in critical condition after being tortured by these SNR agents. The victim is being treated in one of Burundi's hospitals.

II.2.2. GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

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

A girl raped in Rutegama commune, Muramvya province

On October 7, 2024, around 6 p.m., on Gashingwa hill, Rutegama commune, Muramvya province, K.D, aged 13, a 5th grade student at ECOFO Gashingwa, was raped by Fulgence Nahishubije, aged 53, a farmer and member of CNDD-FDD.

According to eyewitnesses, the victim had just bought a soap in a shop in Gashingwa trading center and then she met Fulgence who offered to give her 5,000 BIF to sleep with him, which the victim allegedly refused.

According to the same eyewitnesses, Fulgence immediately took her by force into a bush, roped her and raped her. The neighbors who heard the child's cries came to aid her and found her still roped. They called her parents who took her to Kibimba hospital and medical examinations confirmed the rape.

The alleged perpetrator who had fled was arrested on October 9, 2024 at the home of his friend Pamphile Barengayabo on the same hill. The population of Gashingwa called the police and OPJ Adjudant major Juvent Havyarimana and arrested him and took him to Rutegama police cell where he is imprisoned with his friend who had hidden him.

A little girl raped in Kayanza commune and province

Information received by Ligue Iteka on October 13, 2024, indicates that on October 6, 2024, around 4 p.m., on Rwintare hill, Kayanza commune and province, F.T. aged 11 was raped by Elvis Irankunda aged 19, a resident of Murima hill, Kayanza commune and province. According to eyewitnesses, the alleged perpetrator inserted a piece of reed into the child's genitals after raping her.

According to the victim, she was playing with others and Elvis came with other boys including Moïse Irankunda aged 19 and Zacharie Nkurunziza aged 19 from Murima hill, Kayanza commune and province. These boys from Murima started playing with those from Rwintare and Elvis ran to Francine by going into banana trees behind the houses. According to sources on site, after a few minutes the others heard the child crying loudly.

While providing assistance, they found Francine lying with a piece of reed stuck in her genitals. The Rwintare hill head Marie Goreth Minani alerted the people and the child was taken to Kayanza hospital and then transferred to Ngozi autonomous hospital.

The alleged perpetrator was arrested by the residents of Rwintare hill on the orders of the hill head. For investigation purposes, they also arrested Moïse and Zacharie who had come with Elvis from Murima hill and were taken to Kayanza police station cell.

A woman beaten in Kayanza commune and province

Information received by Ligue Iteka on October 13, 2024 indicates that on October 1, 2024, on Kinzobe hill, Kayanza commune and province, Donavine Abikunda, aged 25, a farmer married to Janvier Nimbona, working in a restaurant, was beaten by his brother-in-law Jean Bosco Irakoze who took advantage of his brother Janvier's absence.

According to sources on site, the reason is that her husband's family does not like Donavine and wants Donavine to leave this family to return to her parents.

According to the victim, only her husband loves her in this family. Others are looking for reasons to prove Donavine to leave their family. This is how on October 1, 2024, Donavine was at home with her two children, her brother-in-law found her at home and accused her of poisoning her children and beat him until he injured her arm.

Back in the evening, her husband helped his wife file a complaint with the hill head and he told them that they had to go to the OPJ the next day. The next day, Donavine filed a complaint with the OPJ but her brother-in-law Jean Bosco refused to respond to the OPJ's summons, saying that he punished a witch who poisoned his children.

A little girl raped in Rumonge commune and province

Information received by Ligue Iteka on October 10, 2024 indicates that on September 25, 2024 on Kanenge hill, Kigwena zone, Rumonge commune and province, B.R.A aged 5 was raped by Dismas Mvuyekure, a goat herder.

According to sources from a children's rights organization in Rumonge, he took the child to his home before committing this rape. The alleged perpetrator was arrested and detained in the police station cell in Rumonge. The child was taken to Humura center in Mutambara for medical treatment.

A little girl raped in Rumonge commune and province

Information received by Ligue Iteka on October 11, 2024 indicates that on September 30, 2024, on Mutambara hill, Rumonge commune and province, L. N, aged 2, was raped by an unidentified man.

According to a family member, the child came home bleeding and the victim was taken to Humura center by her parents and then to Rumonge hospital.

A girl raped in Rumonge commune and province

On October 6, 2024, on Muhanda hill, Rumonge commune and province, S.N, aged 11, an orphan, was raped by Floribert Manirakiza, aged 25, a domestic worker and member of CNDD-FDD party at their home. According to a victim's family member, the alleged perpetrator was arrested and imprisoned in Rumonge police station cell and the victim was taken to Humura center for medical treatment.

II.3. RIGHT TO FREEDOM

II.3.1. PERSONS ABDUCTED AND/OR REPORTED MISSING

A member of CNDD-FDD party abducted in Gisagara commune, Cankuzo province

On October 9, 2024, around 7 p.m., on Muka hill, Bumba zone, Gisagara commune, Cankuzo province, Oscar Baragafise, aged 41, father of 4 children, member of CNDD-FDD party, was abducted by unidentified people with a Hilux double cabin vehicle with tinted windows and with no registration number.

According to sources on site, Oscar has been repatriated since March 2024 from Nduta refugee camp in the United Republic of Tanzania. He was abducted when he was returning home from his kiosk at Rusigabangazi market, where he was selling food products.

Oscar Baragafise is from Bwambarangwe commune, Kirundo province and upon his repatriation, he preferred to settle in Muka center. His relatives searched for Oscar in all the cells but in vain.

A person abducted in Muha commune, Bujumbura Mairie

On October 7, 2024, around 9 p.m., in Kajiji quarter, Kanyosha zone, Muha commune, Bujumbura Mairie, Désiré Nibitanga, father of 5 children, aged 32, was captured by SNR agents. According to eyewitnesses, the victim's arrest took place after he was called by one of his friends named Eric to meet in a local bar called "SINZA BAR" to share a drink. At that time, Désiré Nibitanga was on his way home after visiting his children who live with their grandmother in Ruziba zone in the same zone.

After sharing a drink, Eric suggested to his friend Désiré Nibitanga that they take a bus home while he wanted to take a motorbike. When they arrived on the main road to take the bus, Désiré was arrested by 6 men in civilian clothes but armed with guns.

According to the same eyewitnesses, at that same time, a white Toyota double cabin vehicle with tinted windows came along, carrying soldiers. The same witnesses added that there was another police vehicle, a pick-up type, that followed this double cabin van that took Désiré away.

According to information gathered from witnesses, the van allegedly headed towards Kanyosha commune, but his relatives indicate that Désiré did not have a political party, and are concerned about his security situation since they did not find him in all the cells.

II.3.2. PERSONS ARBITRARILY ARRESTED

A person arrested in Bururi commune and province

On October 9, 2024, on Taba sub-hill, Nyavyamo hill, Bururi commune and province, Bosco Ciza, aged 13, was arrested by Imbonerakure and taken to the judicial police cell in Bururi province city.

According to sources on site, this young boy is accused of having demolished the graves in the cemetery located on Taba sub-hill, 5 km from the provincial city, in order to steal the equipment used to build these graves.

III. ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

III. 1. RIGHT TO EDUCATION

More than 150 children in a classroom in the communes of Cibitoke province

Information received by Ligue Iteka on October 13, 2024 indicates that children are sitting on the floor due to the lack of benches and classrooms in the ECOFO in the communal education directions of Rugombo, Mugina and Buganda.

According to an eyewitness, the ECOFO Karurama II of Rugombo communal direction not far from the provincial office of Cibitoke province where each class registers 160 children while the average per class and per teacher is 50.

All parents and educators spoke of the absence of desks, teaching and learning materials after less than a month of 2024-2025 school year.

This situation is observed in the communal directions of Rugombo, Mugina and Buganda of Cibitoke province. One of the directors of these schools, as in this ECOFO of Karurama II, says a number of 2546 learners for only 16 classrooms and 47 teachers, i.e. an average of 160 children per class. This same director indicates that books for teachers and students, colored chalks and laboratories for practical exercises and desks are lacking.

This educator urges the State and its partners in the education sector to build both new classrooms and rehabilitate those in poor condition so that children stop attending classes on the ground and sitting on stones.

Learning conditions are difficult, hygiene is lacking and teachers are unable to assimilate the subjects to children. Children are massively abandoning public schools compared to private schools. According to one parent, he prefers to take out a loan to cover the school fees for his children in private schools than to have them enroll in public school where the right to their education is not guaranteed at all.

According to various concordant sources, the high numbers of schoolchildren and students are reported everywhere, even across the 6 communal education directions of Cibitoke, particularly in fundamental schools of the 3 communes of Rugombo, Buganda and Buganda.

The further away from urban centers, according to the same source, the situation is the same where the average number of children per class especially between the 1st and 4th grade is between 120 and 180 children per class.

School dropouts for the 2023-2024 school year in Muramvya province

During this past school year 2023-2024, the number of school dropouts in Muramvya province is very alarming. The fundamental classes are the most affected.

According to the DPE, the main causes are among others poverty, unwanted pregnancies, illness, family moves, marriages and others.

Thus, the cases of dropouts per DCE and by category are as follows:

IN FUNDAMENTAL CLASSES

1st Cycle (1st and 2nd years)

COMMUNE	BOYS	GIRLS	TOTAL
Bukeye	105	48	153
Kiganda	300	255	555
Mbuye	266	152	418
Muramvya	455	325	780
Rutegama	355	315	670
Total	1481	1095	2576

2nd Cycle (3rd et 4th years)

COMMUNE	BOYS	GIRLS	TOTAL
Bukeye	70	24	94
Kiganda	139	81	220
Mbuye	139	60	169
Muramvya	289	187	476
Rutegama	269	167	436
Total	906	519	1425

3rd Cycle (5th et 6th years)

COMMUNE	BOYS	GIRLS	TOTAL
Bukeye	133	96	229
Kiganda	141	101	242
Mbuye	180	116	296
Muramvya	394	206	500
Rutegama	364	236	600
Total	1212	755	1967

4th Cycle (7th, 8th et 9th years)

COMMUNE	BOYS	GIRLS	TOTAL
Bukeye	74	53	127
Kiganda	126	116	242
Mbuye	85	92	177
Muramvya	156	168	324
Rutegama	228	197	416
Total	669	626	1295

TOTAL FOR ECOFO : 7263

A. IN POST-FUNDAMENTAL

COMMUNE	BOYS	GIRLS	TOTAL
Bukeye	67	49	116
Kiganda	101	114	215
Mbuye	58	64	122
Muramvya	104	141	245
Rutegama	121	148	269
Total	451	516	967

Total for post-fundamental: 967

Overall total: 8230

Source: DPE Muramvya

According to the Provincial Direction of Education, the most prominent cause is poverty. Thus, to remedy the situation, it is necessary to set up school canteens in schools, without forgetting the multiplication of awareness-raising meetings for parents of students in order to curb this phenomenon of dropouts.

The shortage of sugar in Ruyigi province

Information received by Iteka Lgue on October 8, 2024 indicates that in Ruyigi province, sugar remains a very rare commodity and at the province city, 1 kg costs 10,000 BIF and is sold discreetly, while in Muri-za, it costs 12,000 BIF.

According to sources on site, the seller does not agree to sell 1/2 kg. Those who need it get their supplies from Cankuzo or Gitega and in Cankuzo, sugar exists in only 3 places in the whole province, and the price remains at 8000 Bif per kg.

IV. CATEGORICAL RIGHTS

IV.1. CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

A newborn abandoned in Nyanza lac commune, Makamba province

Information received by Ligue Iteka on October 8, 2024 indicates that on October 1, 2024, on Muyange hill, Nyanza-lac commune, Makamba province, people who were going to the fields very early in the morning found a newborn surrounded by his placenta in a bag. According to witnesses, the family of Nsabimana Hilaire and Nkurunziza Claudine while awaiting good deeds from the administration and humanitarian organizations cared the newborn. His civil registration took place with unknown father and mother.

Three boys victims of human trafficking in Gisagara commune, Cankuzo province

Information received by Ligue Iteka on October 7, 2024 indicates that on September 5, 2024, in Cankuzo province, three boys including Lionnel Tuyizere, aged 11, a 3rd grade student; Théogène Mugisha, aged 11, a 2nd grade student and Alexandre Mugisha, aged 13, a 5th grade student, all students at ECOFO Rusigabangazi, DCE Gisagara, were taken to Tanzania in search of work by Japhet Nizigiyimana, from Camazi hill and zone, Gisagara commune.

According to eyewitnesses, Japhet took the children to Kahama, Tanzania and returned alone. Upon his return, the alleged perpetrator was pursued by the victims' parents in collaboration with local authorities. The alleged perpetrator preferred to leave his original hill of Camazi to take refuge in Cankuzo commune. He was arrested on September 18, 2024 by the authorized authorities and jailed in the provincial police station cell in Cankuzo. The victims' parents were summoned by OPJ Gilbert on September 19, 2024 so that they could file a complaint and provide clarification on this case of trafficking.

A newborn killed in Cankuzo commune and province

Information received by Ligue Iteka on October 7, 2024 indicates that on October 4, 2024, on Gahoko hill, Cankuzo zone and commune, a male newborn was killed by her mother Anitha Rumondo, a farmer, by cutting him into several parts, and throwing them separately in the bush near the path.

According to witnesses on site, it was the second pregnancy from Mélance Ciza, a plumber. Anitha is Mélance's concubine. According to sources on site, both Anitha and Mélance, are all from the aforesaid hill and also members of CNDD-FDD party were arrested by their neighbors in collaboration with the hill authorities and Mélance was taken to the provincial police station cell in Cankuzo while Anitha was taken to the women's cell at Cankuzo prosecutor's office.

Anitha justifies herself before the judges of the TGI Cankuzo that she killed the baby by cutting it with a machete on the orders of Mélance because he did not want to have a boy but, Mélance denies this, rather demands that she be punished for having killed her child. Mélance was reportedly released.

A newborn killed in Nyabiraba commune, Bujumbura province

Information received by Ligue Iteka dated October 8, 2024 indicates that on October 5, 2024, on Mugendo hill, Nyabiraba commune, Bujumbura province, Consolate Habonimana, a single mother, aged 32, gave birth to a baby around 10 a.m. and killed him.

According to the Mugendo hill head, Ferdinand Ntahomvukiye, the girl was alone at home and then gave birth to this child and threw him into Kirambi River. The body was found by people who exploit gravel and sand in this river. The cause that pushed this single mother to kill her child is not known.

The burial of the latter took place the same day around 3 p.m. on the order of the communal administration. The perpetrator of this crime was arrested and detained in the communal cell of Bujumbura province.

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:

- ⇒ The government of Gitega to stop all actions of persecution of opposition activists and take all measures to protect the Burundian population without discrimination of political opinion;
- ⇒ The Minister of Justice to ensure compliance with the law against the perpetrators of crimes;
- ⇒ The Minister of Interior, Community Development and Public Security to inclusively guarantee public rights and freedoms to all Burundian citizens.