

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

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*Weekly bulletin « ITEKA N'IJAMBO » n°455 of the Burundian Ligue of Human Rights "ITEKA"*

**Week from 30 December – 5 January 2025**



*In memory of Madam Marie Claudette Kwizera, Treasurer of Iteka, reported missing since December 10 2015. From December 2015 to 5 January 2025, Iteka has documented at least 716 cases of enforced disappearances*

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## **ACRONYMS**

<b>BRARUDI</b>	: <i>Burundi Brewery and Lemonade</i>
<b>CDP</b>	: <i>Council of Patriots</i>
<b>CENI</b>	: <i>National Independent Electoral Commission</i>
<b>CNDD-FDD</b>	: <i>National Council for the Defense of Democracy</i>
<b>CNL</b>	: <i>National Congress for Liberty</i>
<b>DRC</b>	: <i>Democratic Republic of Congo</i>
<b>ECOFO</b>	: <i>Fundamental School</i>
<b>ETS</b>	: <i>Secondary Technical School</i>
<b>FDES</b>	: <i>Environmental and Health Declaration Form</i>
<b>FRODEBU</b>	: <i>Front for Democracy in Burundi</i>
<b>GBV</b>	: <i>Gender Based Violence</i>
<b>OPJ</b>	: <i>Judicial Police Officer</i>
<b>SNR</b>	: <i>National Intelligence Service</i>
<b>SSD</b>	: <i>Security Sector Development</i>
<b>TGI</b>	: <i>High Court</i>
<b>UGL</b>	: <i>Université des Grands Lac</i>
<b>UPRONA</b>	: <i>Union for National Progress</i>

## 0. INTRODUCTION

This bulletin covers the political, judicial and security context that marked this period. It also covers civil and political rights as well as economic, socio-cultural rights and ends with a conclusion.

Thus, during the reporting period of this bulletin, the human rights and security situation was reported as follows: at least 5 people were killed including 3 found dead, 7 victim of GBV, and 2 victims of arbi-

trary arrest.

Among the victims, there is a girl killed and 6 boys victims of rape.

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

## 1. CONTEXT

Security and human rights issues have been reported in Burundi over the past week. Several violent incidents have been recorded, including the discovery of dead bodies in the communes and provinces of Rumonge, Ruyigi and Muha. A police officer was also killed during an attempted robbery in Buganda commune, Cibitoke province. Other incidents, such as machete injuries and assaults, have also been reported in the provinces of Cibi-

toke, Cankuzo, Ruyigi and Karuzi.

In addition, Ruyigi province has experienced price rise of necessities and a shortage of BRARUDI products. Muyinga province has also experienced a ban on the sale of BRARUDI products in kiosks and shops. Finally, forty-three workers at MINOLACS factory have been placed on technical unemployment in Muramvya commune and province.

### 1.1. POLITICAL CONTEXT

#### **CENI decision on the candidacy documents submitted by political parties, political coalitions and independent candidates**

On 31 December 2024, the CENI published the lists of political parties, political coalitions and independent candidates selected for the elections of MPs and communal councils.

According to the CENI decision, several lists of candidates submitted by political parties were rejected, including the PMP, ADR-Imvugakuri, CNL, APDR, CDP, Sangwe-Pader, RADEBU, FROLINA, AND-Intadohoka and FPI. The main reasons given by the CENI for these rejections mainly concern incomplete lists, as well as non-compliance with the requirements relating to ethnic and gender balance<sup>1</sup>.

Among the parties whose lists of candidates were rejected, the CNL party stands out in particular. Indeed, this party, which came in second in the 2020 elections, failed to present a sufficient number of candidates to meet the criteria of inclusiveness, both in terms of gender and ethnicity. As a result,

all its lists of candidates for the legislative elections were rejected across the country. However, for the communal council elections, its lists were validated only for 33 of Burundi's 42 communes, in accordance with the new administrative division. Also, the lists of the Burundi Bwa Bose coalition, which is the only coalition that submitted candidate files, made up of the opposition parties FRODEBU, CNDD, CODEBU iragi rya Ndadaye and the FDES Sangira party were rejected across the country for the legislative and communal elections in accordance with Article 112, paragraph 1 of the Burundi electoral code stipulating that "*the mandate of a MP may end before its normal term, either in the event of dissolution of the National Assembly, or in the event of a vacancy noted as a result of death, resignation, physical incapacity, permanent incapacity, unjustified absence from more than a quarter of the sessions or forfeiture following the loss of an eligibility condition or the occurrence of a cause of ineligibility. The vacancy is noted by the Constitutional Court seized by the Bureau of the National Assembly.*" Also, the CENI referred to Article 7 of the on political parties, which stipulates in particular

<sup>1</sup>Electoral code of Burundi, article 108, paragraph 1

<sup>2</sup>Law No. 1/006 of June 26, 2003 on the organization and operation of political parties.

in its paragraph 1 that *"any Burundian who has reached the age of eighteen and enjoys his civil and political rights may join a political party. This membership is free and individual"*.

According to Article 112 of the Electoral Code referred to by the CENI, the Burundi Bwa Bose coalition would be in violation by having presented MP candidates sitting in the National Assembly under the label of CNL party, which is not part of this coalition. However, it should be noted that this article rather refers to the causes of the loss of the status of MP and does not specify the criteria or reasons for rejecting candidacies, which seems to be a confusion in the application of the legislation.

Article 7 of the law on political parties, invoked by the CENI, deals with the freedom and modalities of joining a political party, and not the conditions of eligibility. Therefore, rejecting the coalition's candidacies due to the inclusion in the list of MPs sitting in the National Assembly under the CNL party label does not seem justifiable, since this provision does not concern the eligibility criteria of candidates, but rather the membership rights of political parties.

Furthermore, neither of the two articles cited by the CENI provides that an irregularity relating to a single candidate can lead to the rejection of the whole list. In the absence of such an explicit provision, it seems disproportionate and legally unfounded to disqualify the whole coalition list on the basis of a single contested candidacy. In this context, the CENI should adopt a more inclusive approach, in line with the principles of justice and transparency, focusing on the regularity of individual candidacies rather than on a global interpretation of the texts. Such an approach would preserve the integrity of the electoral process while ensuring that all stakeholders have the opportunity to participate fully in the elections, in compliance with the rules and the fundamental rights of candidates and voters.

### **The Secretary General of CNDD-FDD party, Réverien Ndikuriyo engaged in the question-answer game**

On January 3, 2025, the Secretary General of CNDD-FDD party, Réverien Ndikuriyo engaged in the question-answer game at Makamba stadium commonly called "Nkurunziza Peace Park Sta-

dium".

Before starting the activities, a parade of the youth of CNDD-FDD party enhanced this event. Journalists asked a lot of questions to Réverien NDIKURIYO who tried to answer them. Among these questions, there is the one related to a probable pardon of the former Prime Minister, Police General Alain Guillaume BUNYONI, the issue of university teachers who leave to work elsewhere was also raised, Gervais RUFYIKIRI who has just returned to the country, an opportunity perhaps to encourage other Bagumyabanga refugees to return to the motherland, the question of whether he will run for another term, accusations from Rwanda against Burundi on their support for the FDLR who committed the genocide in Rwanda, etc.

Concerning the pardon in favor of the former Prime Minister, Police General Alain Guillaume BUNYONI, he replied that pardon is not for tomorrow (Iki kigongwe kizozza gitevyeye) before adding that even God forgives but that sometimes he punishes by recalling a passage from the Holy Bible where people of Sodom and Gomorrah were punished. He said that the first problems started when BUNYONI started defending his people the party had punished. After that, he tried to have these same punished people appointed to responsibility positions.

He said that he does not share the opinion of those who think that his release could improve the economic situation of the country. He said that he wondered what had Bunyoni to destabilize the country's economy.

To the question relating to the problem of university teachers who leave to work elsewhere, Réverien NDIKURIYO first recalled the case of the exodus of doctors before specifying that this should not always be considered a problem. If Burundians leave to work elsewhere, it is because their skills are recognized and that is good. We need now to train more of them so that there are those who leave and those who stay. And I say: if only that were possible! Now that the quality of education is highly criticized, tomorrow, there may no longer be those who will leave thanks to their skills.

To the question related to Gervais Ruffyikiri who has just returned to the country, Réverien Ndikuriyo said he did not know any CNDD-FDD members

(Bagumyabanga) party who are refugees.

Regarding the issue of running for another term at the head of his party, he indicated that a congress will be held to put in place party officials who will replace those who currently lead the party. Here, he also mentioned the recruitment of children aged 9 as well as fetuses in order to bring his party to lead Burundi forever unlike the UPRONA and FRODEBU parties which have aged.

Finally, regarding Rwanda's recent accusations that the Burundian army is in collusion with the FDRL who committed genocide in 1994, Réverien Ndikuriyo indicated that he finds it strange that it is when Burundi is helping its neighbor DRC that these accusations are being made. Even stranger for Réverien Ndikuriyo is that Rwanda has been fighting in the DRC for about 28 years but has not managed to eradicate this group.

#### **Allegations of corruption and political discrimination in Matongo commune, Kayanza province**

Recent information obtained by Ligue Iteka reveals discriminatory practices against members of FRODEBU party in Matongo commune, Kayanza province. Indeed, on December 17, 2024, members of this party were allegedly forced to pay exorbitant sums of money to obtain residence certificates, a document required to participate in the upcoming local elections.

According to Godin Ntezicimpa, FRODEBU party representative in Matongo commune, he and Mize-ro Mélance, teachers at ECOFO Nyarurama, had to pay 61,000 BIF to obtain this document, while the normal cost is 3,000 BIF. In addition, the communal administrator Janvière Kanyana allegedly ordered civil registry officials to ask FRODEBU party members to pay additional sums for communal development and the construction of a hotel.

These discriminatory and corrupt practices are unacceptable and violate the rights of FRODEBU party members. It is essential that the authorities take measures to stop these practices and ensure fairness and transparency in the upcoming local elections.

#### **Call for violence and hate speech by CNDD-FDD in Makamba province**

On January 3, 2025, during a press conference held at Gisenyi stadium in Makamba commune, Réverien Ndikuriyo, secretary general of Burundi's ruling party, the CNDD-FDD, made shocking remarks during a press conference. He not only defended the practice of recruiting child soldiers, but also called for the physical elimination of any political opponent. According to him, the UPRONA and SAHWANYA FRODEBU parties are described as old. *"We have seen how UPRONA and SAHWANYA FRODEBU parties have aged"*.

This authority indicated that his party will not age like them. This is why we maintain 9-year-old children commonly called "Ibiswi vy'inkona". According to Réverien Ndikuriyo, the recruitment does not stop there: *"We have gone further, we even recruit babies in the embryonic state so that they are born as Ibiswi vy'inkona"*, replied Réverien Ndikuriyo to the journalist's question.

Parents in Makamba province have always denounced the participation of young children in CNDD-FDD party activities during school days without success.

The latter are trained by Imbonerakure in collaboration with honorable Nzigamasabo nicknamed Gihaha and active police officers from the provincial police station in Makamba for almost 7 years.

According to Réverien Ndikuriyo, the CNDD-FDD party could not be defeated in the next elections. These statements were accompanied by threats against political opponents, who would be killed or imprisoned if they dared to oppose CNDD-FDD. There are even communes where only CNDD-FDD will run alone.

According to him, every Burundian has share within CNDD-FDD party, the one who did not give his child contributed either by giving food or prayer.

Do not expect, therefore, that my party can be defeated. Reverien Ndikuriyo said this after the Burundi bwa bose coalition was removed from the electoral race across the country by the independent national electoral commission earlier this week.

Several leaders of the opposition political parties see this practice as eliminating multipartyism in Burundian politics. He also said this when the zonal secretaries of the same party had already begun raising awareness to kill or imprison anyone who wants to interfere against CNDD-FDD party during the upcoming elections.

### **Rejection of candidacies of political parties**

On December 31, 2024, the CENI published the list of candidates selected for the legislative and communal elections of June 5, 2025. Among the political parties excluded, we find the "Burundi bwa Bose" coalition (Sahwanya FRODEBU, CODEBU Iragi rya Ndadaye, FDES-Sangira and CNDD of Nyangoma).

The CENI justified this decision by invoking a vio-

## ***1.2. JUDICIAL CONTEXT***

### **Trial in flagrante delicto at the Rumonge High Court**

On January 3, 2025, the Rumonge High Court (TGI) held two trials in flagrante delicto.

#### **First case: Theft by a hospital janitor**

Isaac Havyarimana, a janitor at Rumonge hospital, was arrested on December 31, 2024 for theft of a box of medicine worth 10,000 BIF. He admitted the facts and asked for forgiveness. The court sentenced him to one year and six months in prison.

#### **Second case: Accusation of rape**

Fenias Nibogora, alias Fenji, was accused of rape allegedly committed on December 28, 2024. However, the trial could not take place because the defense lawyer requested a postponement, arguing that he had not had enough time to analyze the file. Doubts have been raised about the veracity of the accusations against Fenias Nibogora, a member of CNDD-FDD party. Some witnesses claim that two other individuals, friends of the alleged perpetrator, were initially wrongly accused and were released for lack of enough evidence.

### **Arrest of Imbonerakure suspected of murder in Rugombo commune, Cibitoke province**

On 30 December 2024, three young members of Imbonerakure, the youth league of CNDD-FDD

lation of Article 112 of the electoral code and Article 7 of the law on political parties. According to her, some candidates of this coalition are already MPs under the label of CNL, a party that is not part of this coalition. The "Burundi bwa Bose" coalition has decided to refer the matter to the Constitutional Court to contest this decision. Kefa Nibizi, representative of the coalition, preferred to refrain from any comment awaiting the Court's decision.

Other political parties, such as CDP and CNL, have also seen their candidacies rejected in several provinces. For example, for CDP, in the 5 provinces, only one candidacy was retained precisely in Gitega. The CENI has notably criticized CDP for not having respected Article 108, paragraph 1, of the Electoral Code.

party, were arrested by SNR agents. They are suspected of having murdered an person, whose identity remains unknown, on Munyika I hill, Rugombo commune, Cibitoke province.

According to testimonies collected, the victim, from the Democratic Republic of Congo, was allegedly decapitated with a machete and robbed of his possessions, including a huge amount of money. The arrest of the suspects was possible thanks to a dispute over the sharing of the loot between the members of the group.

The inhabitants of Rugombo commune are now demanding justice and are calling for in-depth investigations to shed light on the exact circumstances of this murder. They are particularly concerned about the victim's rapid burial, which could hamper the investigations.

The communal administrator of Rugombo confirmed this information and called on the population to collaborate with the police. The three suspects are currently being jailed in the SNR cell in Cibitoke, while two other persons, also involved in this case, are still being sought.

### **Prison overcrowding at Cibitoke provincial police station**

The families of the detainees at Cibitoke Brigade denounce the deplorable conditions in which their loved ones are being jailed. Governor Carême

Bizoza and the provincial commissioner Jacques Nijimbere are accused of failing to take into account the suffering of the detainees, who are exposed to serious illnesses such as malaria and respiratory diseases due to poor hygiene.

The premises, initially designed to accommodate between 35 and 45 people, currently shelter more than 150 detainees. In addition, some imprisonments are marred by irregularities, including detainees without criminal records, often accused of

trafficking in fuel or commercial goods.

These detainees are arbitrarily imprisoned without trial, for the only purpose of fining them for their release. Other detainees are victims of family conflicts and score-settling, and are detained for the same purpose.

It is important to note that these practices are contrary to human rights and international standards on the rights of detainees.

### **1.3. SECURITY CONTEXT**

#### **A body found in Rumonge commune and province**

On January 2, 2025, the body of Rukundo, a fisherman, was found floating on the waters of Lake Tanganyika, near the Rutumo fishing port in Rumonge commune and province.

According to local administrative sources, the victim, who was guarding a fishing boat, died on board the latter.

Two persons, Irankunda Alexis aged 25 and Nkurunziza Amani aged 16, suspected of being involved in this death, were arrested by the police and taken to Rumonge police station.

Rukundo's body was taken to Rutumo health center awaiting identification and recovery by his family.

#### **A body of a woman found in Ruyigi commune and province**

On the morning of January 2, 2025, a body of a woman, aged between 30 and 40 years old, was found in a bush located along Yatsinda River, between Ngarama and Rukaragata hills, Ruyigi commune and province.

The victim, wrapped in a bag, showed signs of violence, suggesting that he had been killed elsewhere before being abandoned there.

The identity of the victim remains unknown, as do the exact circumstances of this murder. The local authorities, alerted by the discovery of the body, opened an investigation to try to elucidate this tragedy.

Antoinette Semugara, communal administrator of

Ruyigi, confirmed that investigations were underway to identify the perpetrators of this crime and the reasons of this crime.

Waiting for the results of the investigation, the body of the victim was buried by the communal administration in collaboration with the Red Cross.

#### **A police officer killed during an attempted robbery in Buganda commune, Cibitoke province**

On the night of 1 to 2 January 2025 in Buganda commune, Cibitoke province. Pascal Nduwimana, a police officer assigned to Buganda police station, was found dead, decapitated, on Kansega hill, Buganda commune, Cibitoke province.

According to initial investigations, the police officer attempted to rob a home located on the 2<sup>nd</sup> street. Alerted by the screams of the victim, the residents allegedly retaliated, killing the police officer. Nduwimana's body was discovered a few hours later, with marks of several stab and machetes wounds.

The authorities quickly arrested two individuals suspected of being involved in this murder. They were taken into custody at Cibitoke provincial police station.

According to a local resident, the police officer who was killed used to patrol alone on the bridge linking Burundi to the DRC, where he took advantage of his position to rob. This deviant behavior is said to have led to his assassination.

The communal commissioner of Buganda confirmed this information and stressed that investigations were underway to determine the exact circumstances of this murder. He also reiterated the

importance of respecting the law and reporting any suspicious behavior to the authorities.

### **A body abandoned in the street in Muha commune, Bujumbura mairie**

On January 2, 2025, Eric Tuyisenge, from Kirundo, collapsed and died near Mega Oil gas station in Nyabugete, Kanyosha zone, Bujumbura-mairie. Despite his fragile health, he continued working to meet his needs.

The community of Nyabugete, Kanyosha zone, Bujumbura mairie, is in shock after the tragic death of Eric Tuyisenge, a porter at Ruziba market. Despite repeated calls for help from residents, no authority

came to intervene to take the body of the deceased to the mortuary.

Faced with this dramatic situation, residents sought help from local authorities. The quarter head, Ferdinand, as well as the zone head, Arthémon Mvuyekure, both refused to intervene. Calls to the administrator of Muha commune, Dévote Ndayisenga, also went unanswered.

The body of Eric Tuyisenge still lies where he fell, arousing the indignation and compassion of his fellow citizens. The residents of Nyabugete are urging the relevant authorities to intervene so that the body of the deceased is finally taken to the mortuary and the necessary procedures can be completed.

### **1.3.1. OTHER SECURITY INCIDENTS**

#### **A person injured with a machete in Rugombo commune, Cibitoke province**

On the night of December 31, 2024 to January 1, 2025, on Kiramira hill and area, Rugombo commune, Cibitoke province, Emile Nzigamasabo, father of five children, was injured with a machete. The perpetrators of this attack, still unknown, are being actively wanted.

According to residents, young members of CNDD-FDD party are allegedly involved. They are said to have increased their night patrols in the region before the New Year festivities. Although these allegations are grave, the authorities are calling for restraint and asking the population not to engage in mob justice.

The events occurred while the victim was on his way to morning mass. Attacked on the head and neck, he was rushed to Cibitoke hospital, then to Bujumbura, where he is currently being treated in intensive care. Three young people from the presidential party are currently jailed, suspected of having murdered a cross-border trader.

The communal administrator of Rugombo, Gilbert Manirakiza, confirmed this information and assured that investigations were underway. He also called on the population to collaborate with the police in order to identify the perpetrators of these acts.

#### **One person killed in Cankuzo commune and province**

On January 4, 2025, on the road to Cankuzo ETS, in Cankuzo commune and province, Léonard Gicondo, residing on Muyaga hill in the same commune, succumbed to his injuries after a dispute with a driver.

According to testimonies gathered on site, Papy, a driver residing in Gasanda, Ruyigi province, and driving a vehicle registered JA0161, allegedly bruised Leonard Gicondo while driving on the road in Nyamparahara quarter, Cankuzo hill, commune and province. An dispute then broke out between the two men. Papy allegedly accused the victim of trying to cause an accident, before violently kicking him in the chest.

Under the force of the shock, Leonard Gicondo fell heavily, hitting his head on the ground and blood coming out of his nose. Despite first aid and his rapid transport to a medical center, then to Cankuzo hospital, he did not survive his injuries.

The alleged perpetrator of this act of violence fled. The local authorities, alerted to this incident, opened an investigation to find the fugitive and establish the exact circumstances of this tragedy. Christophe Nyamiye, Cankuzo zone head, went to the scene of the tragedy to see the facts.

## **One person injured in Ruyigi commune and province**

Information received by Ligue Iteka on 2 January 2025 reports a dispute that occurred on the evening of 25 December 2024 in Sanzu quarter, in Ruyigi commune and province. Around 10 p.m., in the "Colette Bar" bistro, also known as "Chez Bikan-da", a fight broke out between Pascal Nkurunziza, nicknamed "Nusu", and Elie Ndikuryayo. Both individuals are residents of Sanzu quarter.

According to eyewitnesses, Pascal Nkurunziza allegedly punched Elie Ndikuryayo in the face, causing minor injuries. Fortunately, the rapid intervention of a police patrol, led by Brigadier Léontine Niyonzima, helped put an end to the dispute and prevent the situation from escalating further. The latter was immediately taken to Ruyigi provincial police station cell, where he spent the night in police custody. However, he was released on December 26, 2024 after paying a fine of 50,000 BIF.

In parallel with this incident, local authorities were alerted to an increase in thefts in Sanzu and Gasanda quarters. More than five households were reportedly robbed in the week leading up to January 5, 2025. No arrests have been made yet, and some local sources speculate that these robberies may be

linked to the recent mass release of prisoners from Ruyigi Central Prison, following a presidential pardon.

## **A police commissioner beaten in Buhiga commune, Karuzi province**

On January 3, 2025, at around 9 a.m., in the motorcycle parking of Buhiga market, in Karuzi province, Guillaume, a former PMPA and communal commissioner, was attacked by a group of motorcyclists.

According to the testimonies collected, the commissioner, in civilian clothes, allegedly tried to arrest motorcycles without registration papers. Faced with this refusal, the motorcyclists reportedly became angry and punched and kicked him. The commissioner's motorcycle was overturned and all the fuel spilled on the ground. Injured in the arms, the commissioner had to be rescued by other police officers and taken to Buhiga hospital.

Following this incident, the provincial commissioner, Juvénal Nibona, and the communal administrator, Thérance Bacebaseme, went to the scene in the afternoon to try to calm tensions and call on the population to respect the authorities.

## **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 has taken 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 gua-

ranteed by the regularly ratified international texts are an integral part of this constitution, implementing texts are put in place, in particular the penal code of December 29, 2017 and the code of criminal procedure of May 11, 2018 and other institutions for the protection of human rights in Burundi have been created.

### **II.1. RIGHT TO PHYSICAL INTEGRITY**

#### **II.1.1. GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE**

## **A woman beaten by her husband in Buhiga commune, Karuzi province**

Information received by Ligue Iteka on January 5, 2024 indicates that on December 20, 2024, around 8 p.m., on Gitanga hill, Buhiga commune, Karuzi province, Nzeyimana, aged 40, a member of CNDD-FDD party, assaulted his wife, Bibiane, aged 34, also member of CNDD-FDD party.

According to the testimonies collected, the origin of this incident was a disagreement over the sale of a family cow. Faced with his wife's refusal, Nzeyimana lost his temper and beat her with a stick, causing the loss of two of her teeth. The victim was left for dead and her husband went to Buhiga zone police station on his own, where he is being jailed. Bibiane was rushed to hospital and was released from Buhiga hospital on 30 December 2024.

## **Six children, all boys, raped in Kayanza commune and province**

On December 28, 2024, on Bubezi hill in Kayanza commune and province, the police arrested Bosco Igiraneza, nicknamed Kibutura, a hairdresser accused of raping six boys aged between 13 and 18.

From Musave hill in Kayanza city, the alleged perpetrator had already been convicted of similar acts in 2022 and had received a presidential pardon. After his release, he settled in Bubezi where he worked as a hairdresser and screened videos in a mini-studio. It was in this context that he allegedly attracted his young victims by promising them paid employment.

Once the young boys were hired, Kibutura drugged them with local alcoholic beverages (Kik, Karibu) to make them unconscious and sexually assault them. He then threatened them with death if they revealed the facts.

Thanks to the vigilance of the owner of the house

## ***II.2. RIGHT TO FREEDOM***

### ***II.2.1. ARBITRARY ARRESTS***

#### **Illegal detention of UPRONA party member in Rutovu commune, Bururi province**

On 30 December 2024, on Ruringanizo hill, Rutovu commune, Bururi province, Jean Ndemeye, UPRONA party member, aged 50, from Kajondi hill and zone, Rutovu commune, Bururi province was arrested by the head of SNR in Bururi province under the warrant of Dieudonné Nkunuzimana, prosecutor in Bururi.

According to an eyewitness, after taking Ndemeye to Bururi prosecutor's office, he was informed by the prosecutor's deputy, Dieudonné Nkunuzimana that the arrest warrant had been signed on the orders of the local SNR head. On the same day, he was jailed at the provincial police station. The following day, Attorney General Emmanuel Iradukunda referred the case to his deputy Munezero Jean Bosco, who accused Jean Ndemeye of attempting to escape from Bururi prison, in unknown circumstances.

The deputy indicated that the charge of escape was brought on the orders of the attorney general at Bururi Court of Appeal. Prison sources say Jean Ndemeye had already been released on December 13,

rented by Kibutura, the case was revealed. Having noticed strange behavior between his son and the tenant, the father insisted on knowing the reason for this tension. Under pressure, the teenager finally confessed to the acts of pedophilia he was victim of. Alerted, the hill dignitaries immediately contacted the police and Mugisha, OPJ is in charge of the investigation.

The names of the victims are:

- 1) K. N. aged 14, raped on the night of 8/12/2024.
- 2) S.N aged 15, raped on the night of 14/12/2024
- 3) J.B aged 18, raped on the night of 20/12/2024
- 4) I.N aged 15, raped on the night of 4/12/2024
- 5) O.M aged 18, raped on the night of 18/12/2024
- 6) B.N aged 17. He spent a week with the alleged perpetrator from 10/12 to 17/12/2024

2024, following a presidential pardon, after more than two years of pretrial detention for illegally carrying a weapon. He was initially acquitted by Bururi TGI in March 2023, but the Court of Appeal reversed this judgment on March 6, 2023, imposing a fine of 100,000 BIF, which he paid on July 18, 2023. The Court of Cassation having referred the case back to the Court of Appeal, the latter confirmed its previous decision in October 2024.

#### **A girl arrested in Nyanza-lac commune, Makamba province**

Information received by Ligue Iteka on January 3, 2024 indicates that on December 20, 2024, on Kabondo hill, Nyanza-lac zone and commune, Makamba province, Adonette Manirakiza was arrested by the police. According to the same sources, Adonette Manirakiza had been having intimate relations with Ernest Minani since the 8<sup>th</sup> year of ECOFO at UGL University of Bujumbura under the financial support of Ernest Minani without any family relationship with the girl's parents.

Once his studies were completed, Ernest wanted to marry Adonette, a proposal she refused. Furious,

Ernest then filed a complaint against her, accusing her of fraud and theft of a sum of 19 million Burundian francs that he had allegedly given her during her studies.

Arrested and jailed, Adonette was presented to Makamba prosecutor's office. The deputy prosecutor,

Sylvestre Ndayegamiye, retained the charges of fraud and theft. According to sources on site, the prosecutor allegedly put pressure on Adonette to agree to marry Ernest in exchange for the withdrawal of the charges. The prosecutor forced Adonette to pay this amount if she does not accept to marry Ernest, even though he is married.

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

#### **The price rise of necessities and the shortage of BRARUDI products in Ruyigi province**

Information received by Ligue Iteka on January 2, 2025 indicates that the inhabitants of Ruyigi province celebrated particularly difficult end-of-year festivities due to a deteriorating economic situation. The significant price rise of necessities, particularly meat, has considerably reduced household purchasing power. According to sources on site, a kilogram of meat has increased from 2,000 BIF to 3,000 BIF in Ruyigi city.

In addition, a shortage of BRARUDI products has been noted, further limiting consumption possibilities. Families, facing increased financial difficulties, have had to give up buying new clothes for their children and are worried about their ability to finance school fees for the second term.

The increase in transport fares is further worsening this situation. The cost of travel, particularly on Ruyigi-Cankuzo, Ruyigi-Gitega and Gitega-Bujumbura lines, has increased significantly, making travel more unaffordable for the population.

As an illustration for Probox transport cars, the fares for Ruyigi-Cankuzo trip has increased from 10,000 Buf to 15,000 Bif, Ruyigi-Gitega from 12,000 Bif to 20,000 Bif and Gitega-Bujumbura trip has increased from 15,000 Bif to 30,000 Bif or even more, to name just a few.

#### **Bans on the trade of BRARUDI products in kiosks and shops in Muyinga province**

A worrying situation due to the unfair measure taken by the Governor of Muyinga province regarding the trade of BRARUDI products in kiosks and shops as well as other bars which, according to him, do not meet the conditions to be called "Bar".

In his communique signed on December 23, 2024 in its point 3, the Governor of Muyinga province orders all administrators in his constituency to prohibit or remove from the list of traders of the brewery's drinks all kiosks and shops and bars that do not have remarkable comfort. This communique was followed by police searches as well as the closure of these kiosks.

The administrators have listed those who are eligible to BRARUDI products supply from the mega SSD. Those who are not on the list have no right to sell these products, not even a Fanta.

For example, the kiosks of Jérôme Niyokindi, Evelynne Ciragiye, Moussa Ngendakumana, Claude Wizeyimana, Solange alias Soso, Chez Gérard and Arsène magistrate in Muyinga commune, have been closed.

These kiosk owners saw their business closed while they had invested to feed their family. The population also laments this measure because the kiosks and shops helped them to have beers very close especially during these days when there is a dreadful shortage of drinks. Another shocking thing is that among those on the lists of those who are eligible, there are some who do not even have a place to shelter people if it rains.

#### **Forty-three workers at MINOLACS plant laid off in Muramvya commune and province**

Since December 23, 2024, forty-three workers at MINOLACS plant located in Muramvya commune and province have been laid off. According to Cishahayo Therence, MINOLACS general manager, the plant has been experiencing a lack of foreign currency to import wheat from Russia and Australia and that even the small quantity of imported wheat has a transport problem due to the lack of fuel.

Thus, the plant has not been operating since mid- per day has been recorded. If nothing is done, the December 2024. A loss of more than 50 million BIF plant risks closing in the coming days.

#### ***IV. CONCLUSION***

Ligue Iteka notes and denounces the persistent deterioration of human rights throughout the country. It condemns the impunity of the perpetrators of crimes and launches an urgent appeal :

- ⇒ To the Burundian Government to guarantee respect for human rights, including freedom of expression, association and assembly;
- ⇒ To the Government of Gitega to put an end to impunity by bringing to justice and holding accountable for their actions the perpetrators of human rights violations;
- ⇒ To the same government to take measures to improve the security situation in the country, including by combating violence and crime;
- ⇒ To the Government to ensure the security and freedom of expression of parties and candidates to promote democracy;
- ⇒ To the Government to strengthen the transparency of the electoral process to prevent fraud and irregularities;
- ⇒ To the government to restore a peaceful political climate to allow free and transparent elections to be held.