

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

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*Weekly bulletin « ITEKA N'IJAMBO » n°456 of the Burundian Ligue of Human Rights "ITEKA"*

**Week from 6 – 12 January 2025**



*In memory of Madam Marie Claudette Kwizera, Treasurer of Iteka, reported missing since December 10 2015. From December 2015 to 12 January 2025, Iteka has documented at least 716 cases of enforced disappearances*

<b>CONTENTS</b>	<b>PAGES</b>
<b>ACRONYMS.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>0. INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>I. CONTEXT.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>I.1. POLITICAL CONTEXT.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>I.2. JUDICIAL CONTEXT.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>I.3. SECURITY CONTEXT.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>I.3.1. OTHER SECURITY FACTS.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>II. CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>II.1. RIGHT TO PHYSICAL INTEGRITY.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>II.1.1. TORTURE.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>II.2. RIGHT TO FREEDOM.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>II.2.1. ARBITRARY ARRESTS.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>III. ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>IV. CONCLUSION.....</b>	<b>12</b>

## **ACRONYMS**

<b>ADR</b>	: <i>Democratic Alliance for Renewal</i>
<b>AFRABU</b>	: <i>Association of Returned Women in Burundi</i>
<b>AND</b>	: <i>National Alliance for Development of Burundi</i>
<b>BRARUDI</b>	: <i>Brewery and Lemonade of Burundi</i>
<b>CDP</b>	: <i>Council of Patriots</i>
<b>CECI</b>	: <i>Independent Communal Electoral Commission</i>
<b>CENI</b>	: <i>Independent National Electoral Commission</i>
<b>CEPI</b>	: <i>Independent Provincial Electoral Commission</i>
<b>CNDD-FDD</b>	: <i>National Council for the Defense of Democracy - Forces for the Defense of Democracy</i>
<b>CNL</b>	: <i>National Congress for Freedom</i>
<b>CODEBU</b>	: <i>Council for Democracy and Sustainable Development of Burundi</i>
<b>EAC</b>	: <i>East African Community</i>
<b>FDLR</b>	: <i>Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda</i>
<b>FDNB</b>	: <i>Burundi National Defense Forces</i>
<b>FLN</b>	: <i>National Liberation Force</i>
<b>FROLINA</b>	: <i>Front for National Liberation of Burundi</i>
<b>OBR</b>	: <i>Burundi Revenue Authority</i>
<b>OPJ</b>	: <i>Judicial Police Officer</i>
<b>PMP</b>	: <i>Parliamentary Monarchist Party</i>
<b>RADEBU</b>	: <i>Rally of Democrats for development in Burundi</i>
<b>DRC</b>	: <i>Democratic Republic of Congo</i>
<b>SOSUMO</b>	: <i>Moso Sugar Company</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, social and 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 3 people were killed, including 2 found dead, 2 victims of torture and 6 victims of arbitrary arrests.

Among the victims, there is 1 woman found dead and 2 minors victims of arbitrary arrest.

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

## 1. CONTEXT

Security and human rights problems have been reported in Burundi over the past week. Several violent incidents have been recorded, including the discovery of lifeless bodies in the provinces of Makamba and Cibitoke.

Two people were shot and five others injured in Buganda commune, Cibitoke province. Other incidents, such as knife and machete injuries, assaults, and burned houses were also reported in Gitega, Makamba, Cibitoke and Karuzi provinces.

In addition, Cankuzo province experienced a fuel shortage and a spike in the prices of basic necessities. The same province also experienced a ban on the trade of BRARUDI products.

### 1.1. POLITICAL CONTEXT

**Constitutional Court rulings on appeals by political parties, political coalitions and independent candidates**

Agathon MP candidates sitting in the National Assembly under the CNL label, while this party is not part of the coalition.

On December 31, 2024, the Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI) published the lists of political parties, political coalitions and independent candidates selected for the elections of MPs and communal councils. However, several lists of candidates presented by political parties were rejected, including those of PMP, ADR-Imvugakuri, CNL, APDR, CDP, Sangwe-Pader, RADEBU, FROLINA, AND-Intadohoka and FPI. The reasons for these rejections are mainly incomplete lists and failure to comply with ethnic and gender balance requirements<sup>1</sup>. Furthermore, the lists of the “Burundi Bwa Bose” coalition made up of the opposition parties FRODEBU, CNDD, CODEBU iragi rya Ndaye and FDES Sangira party were rejected throughout the country for the legislative and communal elections in accordance with Article 112, paragraph 1 of the Burundian Electoral Code and Article 7 of the Law on Political Parties<sup>2</sup>. This coalition was accused of having presented pro-Rwasa

Following these rejections by the CENI, these political parties and coalitions filed a complaint with the Constitutional Court and the latter issued its ruling<sup>3</sup> on January 7, 2025.

Concerning the CNL party, which had seen all its lists rejected for all 5 provinces in the country for the legislative elections due to non-compliance with ethnic and gender balances, the ruling of the Constitutional Court instructed this party to rearrange its lists in order to comply with the requirements of the law.

As for the Burundi Bwa Bose coalition, the Constitutional Court ruled<sup>4</sup> that since CNL party is not a member of the Burundi Bwa Bose coalition, members of this party should not appear on the lists of MP candidate of the said coalition. In this ruling, the Constitutional Court took up the controversial article 112 of the electoral code of Burundi

<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.

<sup>3</sup>Ruling RCCB 432

<sup>4</sup>Ruling RCCB 433

mentioned by the CENI, which rather refers to the causes of the loss of MP status and does not specify the criteria or reasons for rejecting candidacies.

In view of these maneuvers, it is clear that the regime is deliberately seeking to exclude Agathon Rwasa from participating in the 2025 elections. Agathon Rwasa's removal from the electoral race is a series of events that began in June 2023, with the suspension of CNL party's activities by the Minister of the Interior. This suspension was followed by the party's allocation to a dissident group led by Nestor Girukwishaka.

In conclusion, all the events that have taken place since June 2023 reveal a series of maneuvers orchestrated by the regime to marginalize Agathon Rwasa and his party, the CNL, in order to prevent him from participating in the 2025 legislative and communal elections. The rejection of the Burundi Bwa Bose coalition lists demonstrate a clear desire to block political competition and exclude opposition actors deemed too influential. The Constitutional Court's decision was seen as another act in a strategy to limit democratic participation. These actions therefore raise questions about the transparency and fairness of the upcoming electoral process, which suggests a potentially biased electoral framework, where opposition parties and coalitions are increasingly excluded. In such a context, the credibility of the 2025 elections could be seriously questioned, particularly with regard to the freedom and plurality of the political play.

### **Words and acts of intimidation by young Imbonerakure in Cankuzo province**

Last week was marked by intense political activity by CNDD-FDD party in almost all the communes of the provinces of Ruyigi and Cankuzo. Some wonder whether the electoral campaign has already started, while the elections have not yet officially been launched. In Gisagara commune, youth affiliated with CNDD-FDD party organized a football tournament on 11 January 2025, which was described as propaganda and intimidation against members of opposition parties. The Imbonerakure youth paraded, accompanied by songs and slogans that caused despair among members of other parties

about the results of the upcoming elections.

Some people even believe that the elections are unnecessary and that the budget could be used for other development projects.

The same activities were organized in Kigamba commune, Cankuzo province, where CNDD-FDD party held meetings to sensitize members about the upcoming elections.

In Butaganzwa commune, Ruyigi province, Imbonerakure youth organize sport activities every Saturday that include physical and paramilitary exercises, accompanied by songs that sow hatred and intimidation against members of the opposition. These activities have raised concerns about the transparency and fairness of the upcoming elections.

**The president of the Independent Provincial Electoral Commission (CEPI) of Burunga province is accused of having drafted reports unilaterally, thus contradicting the decisions taken collegially.**

Two lists of UPRONA party in the communal elections were rejected by the Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI), which has raised concerns among the opposition parties. The latter accuse Philémon Nahabandi, president of the independent provincial electoral commission of Burunga, of modifying the analysis reports of the candidates' files and of favoring the ruling party.

The opposition parties denounce in particular the rejection of the lists of communal councilors in the communes of Bururi and Musongati, which had nevertheless been approved by the members of CEPI Burunga. They believe that this rejection is due to irregularities committed by Philémon Nahabandi, who allegedly modified the reports to reject the lists.

Members of the opposition parties are calling on the CENI to closely monitor the situation and take measures to ensure the transparency and fairness of the elections. They recall that Philémon Nahabandi has already been involved in election-rigging cases in 2015 and that he was appointed as head of CEPI Makamba by CNDD-FDD party.

## **Hate speech by the secretary general of CNDD-FDD party in Makamba province**

In a press conference held on January 3, 2025 for journalists at his private stadium dedicated to the late Pierre Nkurunziza in Makamba province, the secretary general of CNDD-FDD, Réverien Ndikuriyo, accused Rwanda of using genocide as a pretext to destabilize the sub-region. He said that Burundi does not care about genocide, but rather about its security. Ndikuriyo also claimed that the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR) no longer exist and that Rwanda is using this pretext to cover up its massacres committed in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) for 30 years.

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

#### **Executives of the Presidency of Burundi dismissed and arrested for high treason**

In his Decree No. 100/002 of January 9, 2025, the President of the Republic of Burundi dismissed three executives of this institution. They are:

1. Jean-Baptiste Baribonekeza<sup>5</sup>, head of the office in charge of legal affairs and governance at the Presidency of the Republic,
2. Cyrille Sibomana, head of the Department of Legal Monitoring and Development of Legal Texts at the office in charge of legal affairs and governance
3. Arcade Harerinana, technical advisor in charge of monitoring State litigation at the office in charge of legal affairs and governance.

These senior officials were accused of treason for having released some criminals who were not on the list of people to benefit from presidential clemency, which tarnished the image of the highest authority of the State.

They are accused of having granted freedom to some prisoners in Bururi and Rutana prisons, prosecuted for serious crimes such as rape and murder, while those charged with such offenses were explicitly excluded from the benefit of this presidential pardon.

Grey areas surround this decision by the President.

He also criticized Rwanda for its involvement in the military cooperation between Burundi and the DRC, saying that Rwanda accuses Burundi of operating with negative forces that committed genocide. Ndikuriyo stressed that Burundi and the DRC have signed cooperation agreements, including military cooperation, and that Burundian soldiers are in the DRC as part of this cooperation.

The CNDD-FDD Secretary General also quoted President Evariste Ndayishimiye, who asked Rwanda to provide information on the FDLR positions to the EAC forces to track them down, but without success. Ndikuriyo concluded by asking Rwanda to stop its persecution of the sub-region and not to whine.

Although the total number of prisoners to be released was estimated at nearly 5,442, Ligue Iteka legitimately wonders why the presidential pardon decree was not made public, which deprived the public of information on the execution of this decision. Also, according to information in the possession of Ligue Iteka, nearly 300 prisoners were released even though they were not on the list of prisoners to be released, nevertheless deliberately omitting to release prisoners eligible for release. Furthermore, according to this information, these illegal releases were carried out against corruption. This decision by the President has also highlighted a previous recurring situation, where detainees eligible for presidential pardon remained imprisoned.

To conclude, the decision of the President of the Republic to dismiss three senior officials for their role in the questioned management of the presidential pardon highlights serious dysfunctions in the process of releasing detainees. The accusations of treason, linked to the illegal release of ineligible prisoners, highlight an opaque and non-transparent management of this presidential measure, which harms the credibility of the institution. These events highlight an urgent need to strengthen the control and transparency mechanisms in the management of presidential decisions, in particular those affecting the release of detainees. The question of the responsibility of the authorities involved, as well as the implementation of measures to avoid such abuses in the future, must be a priority to ensure public confidence in the actions of the State in

<sup>5</sup>Jean Baptiste Baribonekeza was the head of the commission responsible for implementing presidential pardon measures



general and of the President of the Republic in particular. It is clear that these three senior officials of the presidency have worked in a network with many other people from the public prosecutor's offices, prisons and others. Ligue Iteka supports the decision taken by the presidency and expresses its satisfaction with the measures already implemented to sanction the perpetrators. It encourages the presidency to continue its investigations to punishing all those involved in the reprehensible acts.

### **Flagrant trial in Rumonge commune and province**

On January 6, 2025, the Rumonge High Court sentenced Phenias Nibogora to 15 years in prison and to pay 500,000 Burundian francs to Aimée Christa Cherissa Iritungira, a 17-year-old house worker, for the rape committed on December 28, 2024. The trial was held behind closed doors due to the victim's minor age. After the events, the victim stayed with her alleged attacker, where she was intimidated and bribed to make her change her mind. The defense rejected the accusations, but did not convince the court. According to sources familiar with the case, the man's family tried to divert the facts, but the prosecution managed to exfiltrate the young girl and have her treated at Humura center in Mutambara for psychological assistance.

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

### **Seven people poisoned, one of whom died in Muramvya commune and province**

On January 9, 2025, around 10 p.m., in commune and province Muramvya city, Ninkingiye Innocent, aged 43, waiter at the hotel bar, Bucumi Janvier, aged 37, cook, Niyongabo Pierre, aged 34, cook, Kangoye Salvator, aged 42, cook, hospitalized, Niyuhire Vianney, aged 39, waiter, Irangabiye Claude, aged 37, cashier, Kaneza Moise, aged 36, waiter, were all poisoned in food containing acid. This happened at "Chalet la Concorde" hotel. According to eyewitnesses, these people, all working in this hotel, shared the evening meal in the same hotel as usual, then they immediately felt stomachaches. According to the same witnesses, they were taken directly to Muramvya hospital, but one

### **A member CNDD-FDD party arrested in Nyanza-lac commune, Makamba province**

Information received by Ligue Iteka on 11 January 2025 indicates that on 4 January 2025, Ernest Minani, nicknamed "Agripêche", a well-known oilman and hotel owner in the southern provinces of Burundi, was arrested at his hotel in Nyanza-lac, Makamba province, by the public prosecutor, Alexandre Ndayikeza. Minani is accused of rape and sexual harassment.

According to sources at Makamba prosecutor's office, Minani's arrest took place after the release of his girlfriend, Adonette Manirakiza, who had been jailed for 11 days. Manirakiza had been arrested on the orders of Minani, who wanted to prevent her from entering into a relationship with another man.

Minani is also accused of using Makamba prosecutor's office to intimidate Manirakiza and extort 19 million Burundian francs from her, a sum he claims to have spent to maintain their secret relationship since she was 16.

The case took a political turn after CNDD-FDD Secretary General Réverien Ndikuriyo raised the case at a press conference on 3 January 2025. This led to Minani's arrest the following day.

Currently, Minani is jailed in Makamba prosecutor's cell, while Manirakiza was released despite the chamber's decision of Makamba High Court to place him in preventive detention.

of them, Innocent Ninkingiye, aged 43, died on the way. The other six were rushed to hospitals in Bujumbura. Medical tests confirmed that they ate poisoned food. Investigations are ongoing, but no one has been arrested so far. It should be noted that not 2 months ago, a similar phenomenon occurred in the same city where 23 people were sick, one of whom died, after drinking milk in a cafe.

### **A body of a woman found in Kayogoro commune, Makamba province**

On 7 January 2025, at around 1 p.m., Béatrice Nibitanga, a 53-year-old farmer, was killed by unidentified people on Gatabo hill, Kayogoro commune, Makamba province. Neighbours reported that the victim had injuries to her neck and head, suggesting

that she was stabbed near her home with a knife.

According to administrative and police sources, the victim had just been working in her field with her daughter, who had just visited her, before being murdered. Her body was discovered by a servant of the neighbor, who alerted the police.

Neighbors revealed that the victim's brother-in-law, Méthode, who recently converted to Islam, had threatened to kill the victim, accusing her of uprooting beans from his field. Method had already received a summons from the victim, who had not yet reported before local notables.

Following this event, the local police arrested four people, including Methode, his two wives and the neighbor's servant, for investigation purposes. The neighbors believe that this murder is linked to land disputes. The alleged perpetrators are currently being jailed in the communal police station cell in Kayogoro.

#### **A body found in Rugombo commune, Cibitoke province**

On January 8, 2024, a body was found in Rugombo commune, Cibitoke province. According to an eyewitness, this body, decapitated, was found in a cornfield near Rusizi River which marks the border with the DRC. Alerted by farmers, local authorities and the police went to the scene. According to initial findings, the victim, whose identity has yet to be established, was a seasonal worker. His body

#### **1.3.1. OTHER SECURITY FACTS**

##### **Two houses of a CNDD-FDD party member burned in Buhiga commune, Karuzi province**

On January 8, 2025, around 11 a.m., on Rweya hill, Buhiga zone and commune, Karuzi province, a house of a man named Misigaro, a member of CNDD-FDD, aged 33, was burned by a yet unidentified criminal. The family was in the fields far from the house but the neighbors intervened and evacuated the belongings that were inside. Eric, a member of CNDD-FDD, aged 27, head of ten households in this locality refused to help the others put out the fire, arguing that it was none of his business. The victim went to file a complaint with the OPJ of the

was found in an advanced state of decomposition, suggesting that the murder was committed several hours earlier. The inhabitants of the region are in shock and are demanding that all light be shed on this crime. They fear that this new killing is linked to a resurgence of insecurity in the area. The communal administrator of Rugombo confirmed the opening of an investigation to find the perpetrators of this abject crime. He called on the population to collaborate with the police in order to advance the investigations.

#### **A person killed in Gishubi commune, Gitega province**

On the night of January 9, 2025, a 30-year-old man, Marc Manirakiza, was killed by unidentified people on Nyakanazi hill, Gishubi commune, Gitega province. The attackers used machetes and clubs to attack the victim.

According to Marie Chantal Nduwayezu, administrator of Gishubi commune, land conflicts within the victim's family are believed to be the cause of this murder. The communal authority indicated that investigations are underway to identify the perpetrators and the reasons behind this crime.

Local authorities are determined to clarify the circumstances of this murder and bring those responsible to justice. The residents of Gishubi commune are shocked by this event and are eagerly awaiting the results of the investigations to understand the reasons behind this heinous crime.

police in Buhiga against this local authority and the latter was arrested and then jailed in the cell to continue the investigations.

On January 10, 2025, around 1 a.m., on Rweya hill, Buhiga zone and commune, Karuzi province, a house belonging to a widow named Véronique, aged 68, a member of CNDD-FDD party, was burned by unidentified criminals. The house was built of adobe earth and had a straw roof. The son of this widow, Térance, a member of CNDD-FDD, aged 37, was arrested and jailed in Buhiga police cell for investigations.



## **Two fuel traffickers shot and five injured in Buganda commune, Cibitoke province**

On the afternoon of January 10, 2025, on the 5<sup>th</sup> street of Nyamitanga hill, commune Buganda, Cibitoke province, Marcel Nkurikiye and Wilson Kantore were shot dead and five others injured by the soldiers while they were transporting fuel from the DRC. According to an eyewitness, FDNB soldiers, armed with heavy weapons, opened fire on fuel traffickers transporting several liters of gasoline and fuel oil from the DRC. According to the same witness, many cans of fuel, transported by the traffickers, were thrown into Rusizi River and swept away by the waters. The bodies of the victims were found and recovered by swimmers a few hours later. According to a military source, the security forces posted at the border were instructed to arrest individuals attempting to illegally cross the border while transporting fraud goods. In order to escape strict customs controls and the risk of abuses, many small Burundian traders go to the DRC to buy fuel and other necessities.

Back in Burundi, fearing reprisals from OBR agents and local authorities, they are forced to throw their load into Rusizi River. Traders who use Rusizi for their activities are faced with a climate of growing

insecurity.

The fear of gunfire from soldiers has considerably reduced commercial traffic on Rusizi. Many traders who were an essential link in the local economy are now forced to give up their activities, leading to a shortage of goods and a rise in prices.

Soldiers posted at the borders do not hesitate to open fire on civilian boats, forcing many traders to turn back to save their lives. The repeated gunfire, often heard from afar, has spread terror among the local populations.

The inhabitants of Buganda commune denounce the actions of some soldiers of the Burundian army who, according to them, are using excessive force during operations aimed at combating clandestine trafficking. The authorities justify these actions by the need to protect the national economy and combat criminal networks. However, these operations raise concerns about respect for human rights and the safety of local populations. Faced with the resurgence of trafficking in illegal goods at the border, the provincial commissioner, Colonel Jacques Nijimbere, a senior Burundian police officer, warned that any local official complicit in these activities would be subject to severe criminal sanctions, in accordance with the penal code.

## **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. TORTURE**

## **Two members of CNL party tortured in Rugombo commune, Cibitoke province**

On the night of 11 to 12 January 2024, on Rubuye sub-hill, Mparambo 1 hill, Rugombo commune, Cibitoke province, Emmanuel Nduwayo and Siméon Niyonkuru, all members of CNL party, were tortured by Imbonerakure. According to the vic-

tims, they were returning from a family night event when they were attacked. One of them was stabbed in the back and the other was beaten. The two men were rushed to CDS Amahoro in Rugombo by Deus Manirakiza, head of Mparambo I hill for treatment. According to witnesses, the attack was motivated by the victims' political affiliation. Local authorities reacted quickly, the police arrested two

suspects David and Gasongo, both imbonerakure, and were then placed in police custody at Rugombo police station. Investigations are continuing to find the other two attackers, Paul and Makarate. The Rugombo zone head, Daniel Bukuru, confirmed the

incident and assured that investigations were underway to determine the exact circumstances of this attack. He also announced the holding of peacemaking meetings to attempt easing tensions before the next elections.

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

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

#### **A person arrested in Mugamba commune, Bururi province**

On January 7, 2025, on Kiroha sub-hill, Nyatubuye hill, Mugamba commune, Bururi province, Gérard Nintunze, a mason, was arrested by the police of Mugamba police station and then taken to an unknown location. Gérard Nintunze was arrested by 6 police officers at his home who beat him up and took him to an unknown destination. Family land conflicts are said to be the cause of this arrest that appeared to be a kidnapping. According to eyewitnesses, after a day without the news of Gérard Nintunze, he was released and returned to his family on the night of January 8, 2025.

#### **Three persons arrested in Rusaka commune, Mwaro province.**

On January 9, 2025, on Cewe sub-hill, Rwintare hill, Rusaka commune, Mwaro province, Cassien Nteziryayo, aged 58, Fiacre Horugavye, aged 38, Aristide Nishimwe aged 23 were arrested from their homes and then taken to Mwaro police station cell for cutting grass used as bedding (Icarire) in a wood plantation of a neighboring family of Zénon Nigarura. According to an eyewitness, they were caught on January 5, 2025, cutting grass on Nigarura family's property. Caught red-handed, these 3 men asked for forgiveness on the spot. According to the same witnesses, believing that the case was closed, they were nevertheless arrested by police officers assigned to Makamba zone police, same province and taken to the cell of this zone where they spent two days. On January 11, 2025, they were transferred to Mwaro provincial police station cell, at the request of Lawyer Nigarura Alexis, resident in Bujumbura, son of Nigarura Zénon, who had gone to his father's the day before

#### **A student arrested in Ruyigi commune and province**

On January 12, 2025, around noon, Réponse Nga-

bonziza, a Munyamulenge student, was arrested by the police on a bus on Murehe hill, Ruyigi commune and province. He was going to Bujumbura to join the "La Solidarité" school in the 6th year, equivalent to the 1st year post-basic. The police arrested him for "traveling without an exit ticket from the Bwagiriza refugee camp". Despite the hours spent in detention, Ngabonziza had still not been released at 5:30 p.m. This arrest raises questions about the reasons behind the detention of this student and the conditions in which he is being held.

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

Information received by Ligue Iteka on January 8, 2025 indicates that on December 24, 2024, Arsène Niyonkuru, a 16-year-old boy, a pig herder, from Rurambira hill, Vugizo commune, Makamba province, was arrested by the police in collaboration with the young Imbonerakure of Bukeye hill, Nyanza-lac commune.

According to witnesses, Niyonkuru worked for Charles Karenzo, the 1<sup>st</sup> Reverend of the Pentecostal Church of Nyanza Lac and a member of CNDD-FDD party. However, he had not received his salary for six months, forcing him to sell two pigs belonging to his boss to survive.

Unfortunately, this led to his arrest and a seven-day detention in Nyanza-lac communal police station cell. Witnesses also revealed that Niyonkuru was subjected to harsh conditions during his detention, without even having access to food, while his boss was supposed to take care of his needs.

The situation took a dramatic turn, as Niyonkuru fell into a coma. The details of this event are still under investigation, but it is clear that the situation is serious and requires immediate attention.

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

#### **Fuel shortages associated with the numerous crossings of Burundian soldiers to the DRC continue to claim victims**

The situation in Burundi is particularly tense at the moment. Fuel shortages, exacerbated by cross-border movements of soldiers and armed groups, have led to an escalation of violence. Ndayishimiye's regime has ordered to shoot anyone crossing Ruzizi illegally, which entailed the assassination of three persons in Cibitoke and Ndava region since 6 January 2025.

Fuel traffickers, who are the country's main source of supply from the DRC, are the first victims of this repressive policy. This situation has caused a spike in fuel prices, which have reached a record high of 20,000 francs per liter. The consequences on the purchasing power of the population are dramatic, with an increase in the price of public transport. The bus fares between Mabayi and Bujumbura has doubled in a few days, going from 17,000 to 40,000 Bif.

It is important to note that this crisis is not only economic, but also political and social. Burundi is going through a period of great instability, and the consequences of this crisis could be catastrophic for the population.

#### **Shortage of fuel, sugar and BRARUDI products in Cankuzo province**

In Cankuzo province, a serious shortage of necessities was observed on 10 January 2025. The affected products include fuel, sugar and BRARUDI products.

Fuel is not available on the official market, forcing consumers to buy it on the black market at exorbi-

tant prices. A 1.5-liter bottle of fuel costs between 20,000 and 25,000 Burundian francs. This shortage has also led to a significant increase in transport fares, which have increased from 5,000 Burundian francs in November 2024 to 25,000 or 30,000 Burundian francs currently.

Sugar is also not available in Cankuzo province. SOSUMO stocks are inaccessible due to fuel shortages, which prevents traders from going there and making a profit. There is also sugar from Tanzania or Malawi, but it is sold at high prices, namely 9,000 Burundian francs per kilogram, and often in secret.

BRARUDI products are rare and available only in small quantities, which leads to speculation and price increases in some places. In the other communes of the province, these products are available once a month and only remain for a few hours at the commune city.

#### **Lack of chemical fertilizers in Cendajuru commune, Cankuzo province**

A week of popular discontent has hit Cankuzo province in Burundi, following a shortage of chemical fertilizers called "Totahaza". This shortage was particularly felt in Cendajuru commune, where the distribution of chemical fertilizers required the supervision of the administrator's social advisor, the police and Imbonerakure youth to maintain order. This situation highlighted the difficulties faced by Burundian farmers to access inputs needed for their crops, and the potential consequences for the country's food security.

#### *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, in particular freedom of expression, association and assembly;
- ⇒ To the Government of Gitega to put an end to impunity by bringing the perpetrators of human rights violations to justice and holding them accountable for their actions;
- ⇒ To the same government to take measures to improve the security situation in the country, in particular by fighting against 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.