

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

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*Weekly bulletin « ITEKA N'IJAMBO » n°460 of the Burundian Ligue of Human Rights "ITEKA"*

**Week from 3-9 february 2025**



*In memory of Madam Marie Claudette Kwizera, Treasurer of Iteka, reported missing since December 10 2015. From December 2015 to 9 february 2025, Iteka has documented at least 719 cases of enforced disappearances*

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## **ACRONYMS**

<b>AFC</b>	: <i>Convention Armed Forces</i>
<b>BRARUDI</b>	: <i>Breweries and Lemonades</i>
<b>CAMEBU</b>	: <i>Central Purchasing Office for Essential Medicines in Burundi</i>
<b>CDS</b>	: <i>Health Center</i>
<b>CMSH</b>	: <i>Human Security Mixed Committee</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>FDBN</b>	: <i>Burundi National Defense Force</i>
<b>FDLR</b>	: <i>Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda</i>
<b>FDN</b>	: <i>National Defense Forces</i>
<b>FLN</b>	: <i>National Liberation Front</i>
<b>FRODEBU</b>	: <i>Front for Democracy in Burundi</i>
<b>OPJ</b>	: <i>Judicial Police Officer</i>
<b>PMPA</b>	: <i>Parties and Armed Political Movements</i>
<b>RED-TABARA</b>	: <i>Resistance for the Rule of Law in Burundi</i>
<b>RN</b>	: <i>National Road</i>
<b>TGI</b>	: <i>High Court</i>
<b>UPRONA</b>	: <i>Union for National Progress</i>

## 0. INTRODUCTION

This bulletin covers the political, judicial, governance and security context that marked this period. It also covers civil and political rights, economic and 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 23 people died, including 15 people killed and 8 found bodies including a woman

member of UPRONA party and a member of CNL party, 12 persons died following landslides, and 2 victims of arbitrary arrest and 1 FRODEBU member tortured. Among the victims, 1 person was injured by unidentified people, among those killed are 2 children including 1 victim of infanticide.

Administration officials and military officials are singled out among the alleged perpetrators of most of these human rights violations.

## I. CONTEXT

### I.1. POLITICAL CONTEXT

Burundi is facing major security concerns, following a speech by the President of the Republic and recent events involving the Imbonerakure and soldiers.

Suspicious movements of Imbonerakure, accompanied by soldiers, have been observed in several provinces of Burundi. On February 5, 2025, six trucks transporting these groups were seen on Ngozi-Gitega national road. Some were wearing military uniforms, while others were in civilian clothes with balaclavas. A military witness reported that these movements are occurring in almost all provinces, with secretly selected soldiers. Some soldiers are aware of these movements, but others, particularly former members of the Burundi Armed Forces, are not.

In Makamba, Imbonerakure are preparing to occupy Burundi's borders with neighboring countries. A witness indicated that the current situation is critical, which is causing serious concern among the population.

More than 500 young people have been recruited to join the Burundi National Defense Force in Cibitoke province. They will undergo military training before being sent to a war zone in eastern Congo to support the Congolese army against the M23. This

recruitment has raised concerns among parents, who fear for the safety of their children. The authorities justify this measure by the need to defend the borders, particularly in the tense context with Rwanda.

The arming of Imbonerakure also raises concerns. An audio message encouraging people to be armed has spread, and meetings have been held to strengthen security and organize night patrols. On February 7, 2025, military officials visited several zones, where they warned that strict measures will be taken against those who approach the affected areas.

Military authorities cite tensions with rebel groups, including FDLR and FLN, which are said to be active in Kibira region. They have implemented severe restrictions affecting even civilians, potentially causing problems for those who depend on these lands for their crops.

The security situation in Burundi is worrying, marked by suspicious movements of Imbonerakure, massive recruitment of young soldiers, concerns about the arming of Imbonerakure, and tensions with rebel groups. The reactions of the civilian population show growing concern about the security and stability of the country.

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

### **Flagrance trial in Rutana province**

On January 5, 2025, in Rutana province, Ernest Ndayiziga, from Gitega commune and province, was sentenced to a 3-year sentence and a fine of 200,000 BIF for each child by Rutana High Court, in a flagrante delicto hearing, accused of human trafficking. Ernest was caught by the police on Nyabantu-Mugondo road in Mpinga Kayove commune, with 5 children on his motorbike including Kévin Rukundogwimana, aged 15, Dionise Nsengimana, aged 14, Eric Bukeyenzeza, aged 13, Léandre Nkurunziza, aged 14 and Eddy Itangishaka, aged 14, all minors from Buhiga commune, in Karusi province that he was taking to Tanzania and these children are minors.

### **Fragrance trial in Rutana province**

Recent information received by Ligue Iteka indicates

## ***1.3. GOVERNANCE CONTEXT***

### **Increase in loading and unloading rates at Rumonge commercial port**

The commercial port of Rumonge, located in Rumonge town in southwestern Burundi, regularly receives products from Tanzania and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). However, the merchant marine office in Rumonge recently increased the loading and unloading fees for goods, which is expected to impact product prices on the domestic market.

According to reports, the unloading fee for a bag of cement has increased from 650 BIF to 1,300 BIF, while that for a box of fresh or dried fish has increased from 1,000 BIF to 2,000 BIF. Similarly, the loading fee for a crate of BRARUDI products, a Burundian company that exports beverages to the DRC, has doubled, from 500 BIF to 1,000 BIF.

Transporters have also increased passenger transport fares to Tanzania increasing from 60,000 BIF to 75,000 BIF, and to the DRC increasing by 10,000 BIF. Traders who buy these products from Tanzania and the DRC fear that these fee increases will be reflected in the prices of goods on the domestic market, thus affecting the purchasing power of Burundian consumers.

that an important verdict was rendered at the High Court (TGI) of Rutana on January 28, 2025. Five men from Ngozi were sentenced to penal servitude terms ranging from 2 to 7 years for human trafficking. The defendants, Elias Ndikumana, Feste Tuyisenge, Audace, Cleoface Dusabe and Lionel Ndayisenga, were arrested for attempting to take children to Tanzania. According to information received, these men worked for a boss based in Tanzania, who paid them for each child successfully transported.

It is important to note that these men did not deny the facts and admitted to working for this boss. In a single week, 17 children who were intended to be taken to Tanzania were returned to their families. This case highlights the importance of the fight against human trafficking and the need to protect children from exploitation.

### **Riot by Probox transport vehicle drivers in Makamba province**

Drivers of Probox vehicles in Makamba province began a riot on 3 February 2025 to protest against untimely fines imposed by road controllers. These fines are linked to accusations of improper loading or exceeding the official transport fares.

The drivers explain that, due to the lack of fuel at the province's gas stations for two months, they are forced to stock up on fuel in Tanzania, where a liter of petrol costs around 10,000 Burundian francs. This forces them to increase the transport fares, which entails in fines from road controllers.

Drivers also denounce corruption by some police officers, who demand bribes to avoid fines. This situation creates tensions between drivers, their bosses and their families. The riot has paralyzed transport activities, affecting passengers and civil servants who work in remote locations. Civil servants have been forced to postpone their trips or take motorbikes, the price of which has tripled. Drivers have said they will return to work only when fuel is available at local gas stations. They also denounce the priority given to gas stations in the economic capital, Bujumbura, to the detriment of those in the upcountry.

## **Kirundo province affected by famine following drought**

The source of Ligue Iteka in Kirundo indicates that a severe drought has been affecting the communes of Busoni, Bugabira and Kirundo, in Kirundo province, Burundi, since November 2024. The rains have stopped, causing significant damage to crops and a famine situation that is setting in.

The local population, which numbers 22,236 households, is particularly affected, as the closure of the borders with Rwanda prevents them from finding work to earn money and stock up on food products. The most affected hills are Gatete, Cabakabura, Gisenyi, Marembo, Rwibikara, Bishisha, Gatare, Nyakizu and Nyabisindu, in Busoni commune; Gaturanda, Kigina, Nyakarama, Kiri and Kigoma, in Bugabira commune; and Ceru, Cewe, Rukuramigabo and Runyonza, in Kirundo commune.

So far, the communal and provincial administration has not provided any assistance to the population, except a meeting organized by the governor with natives of the province living in Bujumbura, the economic capital. However, on February 8, 2025, native officers of Kirundo province collected and distributed food aid, including rice and beans, to help the most affected families.

### ***1.4. SECURITY CONTEXT***

#### **Worrying movements of Imbonerakure and soldiers**

Suspicious movements of Imbonerakure accompanied by soldiers have been reported in several provinces of Burundi this week. On February 5, 2025, six trucks carrying Imbonerakure and soldiers were seen on the Ngozi-Gitega national road, some wearing military uniforms and others in civilian clothes with balaclavas.

According to a military witness, these uncontrolled movements occurring in almost all provinces, with soldiers secretly selected from different military camps. However, some soldiers, particularly those from PMPA, are reportedly aware of these movements, while others, mainly former members of the Burundi Armed Forces (FAB), are unaware.

In Makamba, accelerated preparations by Imbonerakure are reportedly underway to occupy Burundi's borders with neighboring countries in the near fu-

The presidential advisor, Jean. Claude Karegwa Ndenzako, reassured the population by affirming that the head of State will assist them and encouraged them to irrigate their fields as much as possible. The governor of Kirundo also encouraged the population to remain calm in these hard times.

#### **Injustice in the treatment of demobilized people in Karuzi province**

Since February 6, 2025, ex-PMPA demobilized people have begun to receive sums of money, ranging from 700,000 BIF to 9,000,000 BIF depending on their rank, that the State owed them. However, ex-FAB demobilized people have not received any financial assistance, which has raised questions about the reasons for this discrimination. Eyewitnesses wonder whether this difference in treatment is not an attempt to manipulate ex-PMPA demobilized people to encourage them to participate in the fighting against the M23 in the DRC or to intimidate members of other political parties during the elections. The sums of money are paid into the accounts of the commune, which distributes them to demobilized people registered for 7 months, without any discrimination noted at the time of registration. This situation has highlighted injustice in the treatment of demobilized people.

One witness said: "We are in a crucial period that you civilians are not aware of." This situation raises concerns about security and stability in the region.

#### **Massive recruitment of young people to FDNB in Cibitoke province**

The recruitment of more than 500 young people to the Burundi National Defense Force (FDNB) in Cibitoke province has raised concerns among parents. These young recruits will undergo accelerated military training before being deployed to a war zone in eastern Congo to support the Congolese army to fight against the M23.

According to the commander of Cibitoke camp, this accelerated recruitment is justified by the need to defend the country's borders, particularly in a context of tensions with Rwanda. The young recruits will undergo both theoretical and tactical training, with the main objective of accelerating the handling



of small and large caliber weapons.

However, some recruits were absent, fearing to engage in an inter-Congolese conflict whose interest for Burundi they struggle to understand. Parents are also worried, especially since several families have already lost loved ones in this war.

The commander of the 112<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion of Cibitoke, Lieutenant Colonel Ezéchiél Ndikubwayo, reassured the parents by presenting this action as a patriotic act aimed at fighting a common enemy to Burundi and the DRC. This recruitment campaign is taking place in all provinces of the country.

### **The Imbonerakure are being arming: a worrying situation in Burundi**

Concerning security, the arming of the Imbonerakure is raising concern. Following the broadcast of an audio message encouraging the Imbonerakure of Makamba to be armed, this message was spread throughout the country.

In all the communes of Cibitoke province, the Imbonerakure met in the communal offices on February 8, 2025. Their representatives were taken to the provincial city to receive instructions.

On February 7, 2025, the commander of Cibitoke

camp and Governor Carême Bizoza toured the zones of Mabayi, Ruhororo and Butahana. Their message was twofold:

⇒ Simulation of a bad cohabitation with the Rwandan FDLR and FLN rebels present in Kibira. A few days before the capture of Goma, these rebels had joined the DRC to support the FDN and FARDC on the front. According to some sources, less than 1,000 men remained in the forest. Cutting their ties with the civilians who feed them would starve them, forcing them to surrender or flee to the DRC.

However, this measure also affects civilians who are not involved, because the ban on approaching the Kibira deprives them of their fields. The military authorities threaten to shoot anyone who approaches within 100 meters of the forest. This deci-

sion is arbitrary, since homes and crops are located less than this distance. This measure could mask a maneuver aimed at facilitating the introduction of other armed groups. Rwanda could attack the country under the pretext of tracking down the Interahamwe, these authorities conclude.

⇒ Arming the Imbonerakure. In all the zones where these authorities have spoken, their last message has been to call on the Imbonerakure to strengthen security, to intensify night patrols in and around Kibira, and announced that material support would be distributed to them between February 10 and 14, 2025. Meanwhile, weapons have been heard in Kibira since February 1, 2025. A source close to the Imbonerakure who support the soldiers indicates that the group fighting them speaks Kirundi and is likely well-armed, as the fighting has caused deaths and injuries on both sides. It is suspected that this group could be RED-TABARA, but without certainty, as no rebel has yet been captured.

### **Relocation by ONPRA of all urban Congolese refugees to camps in Muyinga province**

On February 5, 2025, Congolese refugees, mainly Banyalmulenge, living in the quarters of Muyina city, were ordered to report to the ONPRA office with their identification papers. Upon arrival, they were ordered to return to the camps without delay, or face the consequences.

After much pleading, ONPRA granted them the opportunity to move their belongings and drop off their belongings at the office. The refugees who were to return to Musasa and Kinama camps were transported by bus from the NGO AIRD on February 7, 2025.

This evacuation entailed significant losses for the urban refugees, including rent paid and school fees already paid. The children of these refugees have also been forced to change schools and may not find schools that will accommodate them in the camps.

It is important to note that urban refugees have the right to live in the quarters, and this evacuation could be considered as violation of their rights.

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

##### **A body found in Itaba commune, Gitega province**

On January 21, 2025, at around 9 a.m., on Buhinda hill, Itaba commune, a body in a state of decomposition of Don Briane Niyorukundo, aged 1 year and 9 months, daughter of Livinous Ndimurwanko and Jacqueline Ngumirizimana was found in Nyakijanda River.

According to the parents and the local administration, the child had disappeared on Tuesday, January 14, 2025, around 9 a.m., while her parents were working in a rice field by the river

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

On February 3, 2025, on Nyabigina hill, Makamba commune and province, a body of Elisabeth Ntungwanayo, aged 68, was discovered not far from her home. According to witnesses in the locality, the victim's body showed signs of injury to the throat and arms. These same witnesses report that Elisabeth Ntungwanayo was strangled by unidentified people who thought she was in possession of money from the sale of a property. Her killers attacked her as she returned home from a nearby bar. Makamba communal administrator Zuena Irakiza says no suspect has so far been arrested for investigation.

##### **A body found in Gisuru commune, Ruyigi province**

On 3 February 2025, at around 10 a.m., the body of Alice Nizigiyimana, aged 18, was found in Ruguzye River, which marks the border between Burundi and Tanzania, near Nyagwijima dam, on Ruganga sub-hill, Muhindo hill, Ndemeka zone, Gisuru commune, Ruyigi province. This young woman was at least seven months pregnant. According to sources on site, she had left home the day before, on the evening of 2 February 2025, to go to Nyagahoro market. She is said to have shared beer that same evening with Juma, from Murangara sub-hill, Kireka hill, in the same commune. Juma is considered as the father of the child to be born; he had proposed Alice to abort, but she had refused. Alice's parents waited for her unsuccessfully until the evening, and that's how the next day, around 10

o'clock, her body was discovered immersed in Ruguzye River by passers-by. The Gisuru communal administrator, Gad, the OPJ of Gisuru communal police and the medical director of Gisuru Hospital, named Raoul, intervened on the scene to establish the facts. After the autopsy, it was established that Alice had been raped before being killed, with indications that her throat had been cut. The body of the deceased was taken to the mortuary of Gisuru Hospital. Juma, who was with her the day before her death, was arrested and jailed in the commune cell for investigation.

##### **A body found in Gisuru commune, Ruyigi province**

On 3 February 2025, at around 11 a.m., a body of Joseph Ndabahaze, aged 81, married, was discovered in Rumpungwe River, on Kaduha sub-hill, Nyarumanga hill, Gisuru commune, Ruyigi province. According to witnesses, Joseph had left his home on 1 February 2025 to plant rice in the marshes of Rumpungwe River. His wife, Christine, waited for his return in vain. Worried, she went to the field and found only the hoe and machete that Joseph had used. Christine alerted the administration and, on 3 February 2025, Joseph's neighbours mobilized to find him. They discovered his body near Rumpungwe River. The perpetrators and reasons for this crime remain unknown. Joseph's body was buried the same day by his relatives, in collaboration with the administration and the Red Cross.

##### **A body of a woman member of UPRONA party found in Makamba commune and province**

On the night of February 3 to 4, 2025, on Nyabigina hill, Makamba commune and province, a body of Elisabeth Ntungwanayo, aged 68, a member of UPRONA party was found with her throat cut. According to witnesses, the victim was returning from a bar where she was quenching her thirst with her husband. Neighbors say that due to the drunken state, her husband realized that he was not with his wife in the morning around 3 a.m. The witnesses say that the victim had injuries to her neck and arms. They believe that her throat was cut by people who have not yet been identified and who were trying to steal money from her because this family had sold part of their landed property. The victim is at Makamba hospital morgue.



### **A body of a member of CNL party found in Gitega commune and province**

On February 5, 2025, around 6 a.m., on Gitega-Rutana RN near Gitega-Mwaro roundabout, Songa hill, Gitega commune and province, a body Cedrick Irankunda, aged 25, member of CNL political party of Agathon Rwasa's wing and hairdresser was found lying on the roadside.

According to an eyewitness, the body was seen by the inhabitants of the locality who were going to Gitega town market. The latter alerted Jean Belchimas Ntahondereye, Songa hill head and the latter alerted the police. Around 7 a.m., Nsengiyumva Sébastien, one of the OPJs of Gitega provincial police station accompanied by other police officers arrived on the scene to make the report.

According to the same eyewitness, the corpse had serious injuries on the forehead and thighs. Ntahondereye Jean Belchimas had informed the local residents during a small peacemaking meeting on site that this young boy would be killed elsewhere and that the as yet unidentified criminals had dumped the corpse there.

#### ***1.4.2. PEOPLE KILLED FOLLOWING MOB JUSTICE***

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

On January 9, 2025, at around 12:00 p.m., a person who has not yet been identified was killed on Karoba hill, in Makebuko commune, Gitega province.

According to the head of Karoba hill, the perpetrators of this homicide accuse the victim of robbing in the household of Melchior Nahimana. Arriving at the scene of the crime around 2:00 p.m., the authorities noted that the deceased had injuries to his

#### ***1.4.3. PERSONS KILLED FOLLOWING SETTLEMENTS OF SCORES***

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

On January 9, 2025, around 11 p.m., Marc Manirakiza, aged 30, son of Bernabé Ntimpirangeza and Faustine Bizimana, was murdered on Nyanza hill, Nyakanazi hill, Gishubi commune, Gitega province.

According to an eyewitness, the perpetrators of this homicide are his brothers, Joseph Siniriwe, aged 35, and Ézéchiél Niyomukiza, aged 22. They beat him to death using tree branches and a machete, inflic-

What is worrying according to our source is that the OPJ said that the victim died following an accident caused by a vehicle as yet unidentified while next to the corpse there was no blood, not even a sign of a road accident.

### **A body found in Songa commune, Bururi province**

On 3 February 2025, on Yengero hill, in Songa commune, Bururi province, the body of Gaspard Yamuremye, 54, was discovered. Witnesses noted that the victim's phone SIM card and battery had been removed, and that he had injuries to his mouth.

According to information gathered, the victim had spent the previous evening in a bar owned by Dieu-donné Nishimwe, who was arrested by the police the next day. The woman with whom the victim had shared a drink has disappeared and is still wanted by the police.

The victim's body was taken to Ruvumvu health centre before a proper burial. The investigation is ongoing to clarify the circumstances of this death.

back and head. The stolen items had already been recovered by Melchior Nahimana, who was not present at the scene. According to the testimonies collected, the alleged thief was a repeat offender, the beneficiary of a presidential pardon. An investigation is underway to identify and arrest the perpetrators of this homicide.

The stolen items are: clothes, a suit, shoes, a packet of soap, a torch and an unfilled oil can. The investigating OPJ is Sergeant Ndibanje Sylvestre.

ting deep wounds on his head. The reason for this murder is believed to be linked to land disputes. The victim was trying to forcibly sell the family land. The two suspects, as well as their father, were arrested and a criminal case was opened against them.

Marc Manirakiza's body was taken to Ntita hospital mortuary, awaiting a medical examination. The investigation is being conducted by the OPJ, Sergeant Ernest Bayubahe.

#### **1.4.4. PEOPLE KILLED FOLLOWING LANDSLIDES OR DROWNING**

##### **Twelve gold miners dead and several others injured following landslides less than a month ago in Mabayi commune, Cibitoke province**

On the afternoon of February 5, 2025, a landslide at a mining site killed six gold miners and injured several others in Rutorero, in Butahana zone, Mabayi commune. Residents are asking cooperative leaders to guarantee the safety of gold miners, while authorities are warning speculators. That day, six bodies were discovered, three were recovered and three others are still not found. Eight people were seriously injured at Rutorero site, managed by *Mana Ishimwe* cooperative. In addition, on 28 January 2025, six gold miners died at Nyakagezi, a site managed by *Ngara Ducukure Ubutare* cooperative, and nine were injured on Gafumbegeti hill. A total of 12 gold miners were killed and about fifteen others injured due to landslides. Fatal accidents are increasing due to heavy rains, burying victims under masses of mud. Residents fear poor organization of the mining sector and demand better protection and insurance for gold miners. Human rights defenders demand protection equipment for these workers. The governor of Cibitoke confirms these facts, noting that these accidents are often caused by illegal activity and threatens sanctions. He encourages gold miners to report these activities and register in cooperatives.

The victims killed by the landslide on February 5 at Ngara site of *Imana Ishimwe* cooperative are as follows:

- 1) Ndayisenga Vianney, 20 years old, from Nyakibari hill, Muruta commune in Kayanza province
- 2) Maniragaba Innocent, 25 years old, from Magoyo hill, Mabayi commune
- 3) Niyomwungere Armel, 23 years old, from Buhoro/Mabayi hill
- 4) Bimenyimana Japhet, 29 years old, from Rutorero hill
- 5) Fataki Claude, 30 years old, from Gafumbegeti hill
- 6) Nsanzerugeze Louis, 31 years old, from Ngara hill in the same Mabayi commune

It should be noted that the same event occurred on January 28 at Gafumbegeti site and killed the following people:

- 1) Irankunda Jacques alias Tanga, 33 years old from Ngara hill, Mabayi commune
- 2) Sindakirabanse Joseph aged 35 from Gafumbegeti hill
- 3) Habonimana Saka, 28 years old, from Gasebeyi hill
- 4) Niyonzima Fabien, 29 years old, from Rutorero hill
- 5) Manimpaye Jean, 33 years old from Rutorero hill

#### **1.4.5. OTHER SECURITY FACTS**

##### **A person died in Gitega commune and province**

On 1 January 2025, at around 10 a.m., Martin Nkurikiye, aged 70, son of Claver Kinyota and Joséphine Kankima, from Mugoboka hill in Gitega commune and province, committed suicide by hanging himself in the house of Euphrasie Ndimurwanako, currently residing in Simba, in Makebuko commune, Gitega province. According to the testimonies collected, Nkurikiye had arrived at night, as usual, to ask for hospitality. They waited for him to wake up, but this did not happen. He was found hanged in the guests' room. It should be noted that no traces of violence were found on the victim's bo-

dy. The rope used for the suicide was burned on the orders of his family and the residents present. The family of the deceased, in collaboration with the local administration, organized the burial. Investigations are ongoing, led by OPJ Sergeant Sylvestre Ndibanje.

##### **A person killed in Gitega commune and province**

On January 16, 2025, around 7 a.m., a death occurred at Gitega regional hospital following an assault. The administrative authorities went to the scene of the crime and noted the following facts: The deceased was identified as Désiré Kwizerimana, aged 40, a farmer from Mugutu hill, Gitega

commune and province, son of Benoît Nsanzurwimo and Gertrude Mpfoyokurera, married and father of two children, currently residing in Rutonde quarter, Gitega commune and province. According to an eyewitness, the body had slight swelling on the head, at the brain level, as well as small marks on the elbows and ankles, suggesting a fall. No other traces of injury were found on the body. According to investigations carried out on the ground, the victim was allegedly beaten by two soldiers in civil clothes, Lambert Gasate and Shaza Ndikuriyo, assigned to Camp 211 in Gitega. An investigation is underway to arrest the alleged perpetrators of this assault and establish the criminal case. The OPJ who made the report is 1<sup>st</sup> Class Wilson Nduwayo.

#### **A person died in Bukirasazi commune, Gitega province**

On January 16, 2025, around 12am, members of the Joint Human Security Committee "CMSH" of Kibuye hill, in Bukirasazi commune, Gitega province, informed Kibuye police that a group of three thieves had stolen a pig from Thérance Nkurunziza. Having surprised the thieves, the CMSH members pursued one of them, Fabrice Niyongabo, aged 30, son of Kahera and Kanani, from the Batwa site of Gasasa hill, in Makebuko commune. During the pursuit, the thief fell into a ditch, fracturing the tibia of his right leg. The police ordered his evacuation to the hospital for treatment. Unfortunately, he died on the way. During the examination, the police found a fracture of the tibia of his right leg and slight injuries to his hands. Although camouflaged, the victim was allegedly strangled by these members of the joint security committee. The thief was carrying a pig, a knife, a small hoe, a bunch of keys and a backpack. The body is currently in the mortuary of Espoir hospital in Kibuye. The judicial police officer who made the report is A. M. Pol Théophile Manirambona.

#### **A person died in Buraza commune, Gitega province.**

On January 25, 2025, Pascal Minani, a 73-year-old man, committed suicide by hanging himself on the roof of his house located on Bugega hill, in Buraza commune, Gitega province. He had used a rope and a ladder to reach the roof.

According to testimonies, Pascal had confided to his wife his intention to commit suicide because of his untreated illness. The family, in agreement with the local administration, decided to bury him the next day. The investigation was conducted by the OPJ, 1<sup>st</sup> Police Sergeant Ntakirutimana Anicet.

#### **Fever of imminent attacks on border provinces on alert by Burundian high authorities**

Rumors of imminent attacks by Rwanda against Burundi via the Tanzanian borders have been relayed by the administrative authorities of Cankuzo province. The Minister of Interior, Community Development and Public Security, Martin Niteretse, met senior police authorities of the border provinces to discuss border security. He warned that reliable information indicates that Rwanda is preparing to attack Burundi and called on the police authorities to remain vigilant day and night.

The governor of Cankuzo province, Boniface Banyiyezako, repeated this speech during a meeting with representatives of provincial and communal political parties, calling on them to prioritize peaceful cohabitation. The party representatives expressed their concern over the terror and intimidation faced by members on the lists of candidates for communal councils.

It is important to note that this information is based on rumors and statements by the authorities, and that it is necessary to take this information with caution and verify it before considering it as established facts.

## **II. CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS**

### **II.1. RIGHT TO FREEDOM**

#### **II.1.1. ARBITRARY ARRESTS**

##### **A woman and her infant jailed in Nyanza-lac commune, Makamba province**

Information received by Ligue Iteka on February 7, 2025 indicates that on January 26, 2025, on Nyabigina hill, Nyanza-lac commune, Makamba province, Ashura Nduwimana and her child under two years old were arrested by the local police during a search. According to the family, this lady with her infant is being jailed on the behalf of her husband who is accused of stealing a smart phone. Even though the phone was found in her husband's belongings during this search, the police preferred to keep her without a file so that her husband could come and free her. She is currently being jailed in the provincial police station cell without a file. The family is asking for her to be released unconditionally.

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

Information received by Ligue Iteka on February 5, 2025 indicates that on January 31, 2025, Patrick Nsengiyumva was arrested at his home in Kabonga, Nyanza-lac commune, Makamba province by the police. According to witnesses, the victim was accused of wearing a T-shirt with the words "Visit Rwanda" written on it. He was arrested by local police officers who were conducting a search at his home on Nyabigina hill in Kabonga zone, the same commune and province. He was taken to a judicial police officer at Nyanza-lac communal police station the same day. The victim explained to the OPJ that he bought it at Rumonge market and that he even have witnesses, without success. He was transferred to Makamba prosecutor's office cell where he is awaiting the outcome of his case. Professionals explain that wearing such clothing is not punishable by any article of the penal code and speak of illegal detention.

#### **II.2.2. PERSONS TORTURED**

##### **A member of FRODEBU party tortured in Makebuko commune, Gitega province**

On the night of January 10, 2025, around 9 p.m., Déo Ndarufatiye, a 39-year-old member of UPRO-NA party, son of Evariste Kijekundya and Caroline Kabura, living in Makebuko hill and commune, Gitega province, was beaten and arrested by members of the joint human security committee accused of

stealing a banana from François Nahimana.

Instead of jailing him, the authorities ordered Sébastien Bakunduwukize and Joseph Ndikumana to take Déo to Makebuko dispensary for treatment.

François Nahimana was jailed for investigation purposes. The investigation is being conducted by the OPJ, Sergeant Ndibanje Sylvestre.

### **II.3. RIGHT TO PARTICIPATION TO POLITICAL LIFE**

##### **Intimidation slogans in Imbonerakure sports activities in Karuzi province**

Since February 8, 2025, the Imbonerakure have resumed their sports activities in Buhiga and Bugenyuzi communes, Karuzi province, after a break of several months. Witnesses reported that on February 8, from 5 a.m., Imbonerakure gathered on Buhiga, Rwingoma, Gashanga, Muyange, and Kiranda hills for team sports until 8 a.m.

During these gatherings, they chanted insulting slogans against CNDD-FDD opponents, while humiliating Rwanda and the M23. The Imbonerakure also threatened to hunt down and correct opponents who support Rwanda and the M23. This situation is particularly worrying given that the Imbonerakure are already considered a group at high risk of violence.

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

#### **III.1. DISRUPTION OF ECONOMIC LIFE**

##### **The price rise of fuel in Cibitoke province**

Cibitoke province is experiencing a new price rise of fuel, which had dropped three weeks ago. A liter of gasoline has gone from 7,000 to 20,000-24,000 BIF, as of 7 February 2025.

This increase came after the deployment of military reinforcements and Imbonerakure on the suburbs of the border communes of Rwanda and the DRC. Intelligence services fear that this military presence is linked to a possible armed incursion disguised as fuel trafficking.

The life of the people are being severely affected by this price rise of fuel, which had previously dropped after the Prime Minister's instruction to let traffickers free, considering that they were helping the country in hard times.

##### **Police officers involved in the illegal sale of brewery products**

Information received by Ligue Iteka on February 8, 2025 reveals that police officers in Kinanira, Musaga zone of Muha commune in Bujumbura, are engaged in the illegal trade of alcoholic beverages, including Amstel beer. Two police officers, nicknamed Bic rouge and Claude, are the main actors in this trafficking. They get drinks from Kinanira depots, either directly or by sending Imbonerakure. These drinks are then resold at prices higher than those set by the brewery, starting at 5,000 Bid. Crates of Amstel were sold near their area of intervention. These drinks are frequently resold in Ceceni by women who collaborate with these police officers. A police officer was seen stocking up on Amstel in a depot located near the bar "Sous le manguier chez Vyisi". The Ceceni quarter is known for various reprehensible acts, such as theft, prostitution, consumption of drugs and other prohibited drinks, with the complicity of the same police officers. The population wonders on the involvement of the police in this type of trade, while they are supposed to monitor and repress it.

#### **III.2. RIGHT TO EDUCATION**

##### **Distribution issues of books for 5<sup>th</sup> year teachers in Makamba province**

Since the beginning of the 2024-2025 school year, 5<sup>th</sup> year fundamental teachers have complained of not having received the necessary guidebooks, while students' books have already been distributed. Teachers report that only the students' books were distributed early the second quarter. Their concerns are that the lack of guidebooks could hamper the completion of the programs.

Some school principals claim that the guidebooks are being withheld by the communal directors of education to force students to pay sport fees. These fees are 1,500 BIF for students in 7<sup>th</sup> year and above, and 1,000 BIF for those in 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> year. The school principals explain that they do not understand why the books are being withheld, knowing that they intend to pay the requested fees once the running funds are received from the Ministry of

Education. They indicate having used their money for other expenses, such as photocopies of report cards and exams.

The situation creates an impasse where teachers cannot progress in their programs, and the principals ask that the books be released to allow classes to continue properly.

##### **Punishment not included in school regulations in Ngozi province**

At Alessandro technical high school in Ngozi, Ngozi province, students who leave school without authorization are subject to an economic punishment not provided for in the school regulations. School officials demand the payment of a bag of cement as a penalty for such an infraction.

Parents of students denounce this decision, which they consider arbitrary and non-consensual. According to the school regulations, desertion of class

should be punished by the withdrawal of 9 scores in education, and not by a financial penalty.

Parents consider these decisions to be ransom measures, while the high school principal, Thaddée Nzigamasabo, claims that the decisions were taken in consultation with the parents.

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

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

#### **A body of a newborn baby found in Kiganda commune, Muramvya province**

On February 4, 2025, on Kivyeyi hill, Gatabo zone, Kiganda commune, Muramvya province, a body of a newborn baby was found in a banana plantation. According to an eyewitness, this body had been thrown away by her mother Niyonzima Scholas-tique, aged 22, a domestic worker at Karakura Gas-pard, teacher at ECOFO Kivyeyi. According to the

eyewitness, this girl was suspected of being pre-gnant and it was her boss who first saw the body wrapped in a bag. He alerted the police and OPJ Nkeshimana Nestor arrived on the scene for report. The alleged perpetrator who had fled was arrested the next day on the neighboring hill of Rubumba hiding at a friend's house. She is currently in Kigan-da police cell. The body was buried the same day at Kivyeyi cemetery, and the burial was arranged by the perpetrator's boss.

## **V. CONCLUSION**

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

- ♦ **To the Government of Gitega including the Minister of Justice and the Minister of Interior, Community Development and Public Security:**
  - ⇒ To stop impunity by bringing to justice and holding accountable for their actions the perpetrators of human rights violations;
  - ⇒ To order the members of the joint security committees and prevent them from engaging in mob justice;
  - ⇒ To take measures to improve the security situation in the country, in particular by combating violence and crime
- ♦ **To the government of Gitega, including the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of Defense, that** it is important to note that the situation in Burundi in the internal conflict in the DRC is complex and requires a nuanced and coordinated approach to find lasting solutions and therefore :
  - ⇒ To strengthen cooperation between countries in the region to prevent any escalation of violence and promote regional stability;
  - ⇒ To take measures to protect civilians not involved in the conflicts, in particular those living near the Kibira forest.
- ♦ **To the Government, including the Minister of Solidarity**
  - ⇒ To respect the Geneva Convention. Urban refugees have the right to live in quarter, and their evacuation could be considered as a violation of their rights.