

BURUNDIAN LIGUE OF HUMAN RIGHTS "ITEKA"

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Weekly bulletin « ITEKA N'IJAMBO » n°461 of the Burundian Ligue of Human Rights "ITEKA"

Week from 10 – 16 February 2025



In memory of Madam Marie Claudette Kwizera, Treasurer of Iteka, reported missing since December 10 2015. From December 2015 to 16 february 2025, Iteka has documented at least 719 cases of enforced disappearances

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ACRONYMS

CENI	: <i>Independent National Electoral Commission</i>
CEPI	: <i>Independent Provincial Electoral Commission</i>
CNDD-FDD	: <i>National Council for the Defense of Democracy-Forces for the Defense of Democracy</i>
CNL	: <i>National Congress for Liberty</i>
DRC	: <i>Democratic Republic of Congo</i>
ECOFO	: <i>Fundamental School</i>
ETS	: <i>Secondary Technical School</i>
FRODEBU	: <i>Front for Democracy in Burundi</i>
M23	: <i>March 23 Movement</i>
OPJ	: <i>Judicial Police Officer</i>
SGBV	: <i>Sexual and Gender-Based Violence</i>
TGI	: <i>High Court</i>
UPRONA	: <i>Union for National Progress</i>

0. INTRODUCTION

This bulletin covers political, judicial, humanitarian and security context that marked this period.

It also covers civil and political rights, as well as economic, social and cultural rights, and closes with a conclusion.

Thus, during this reporting period of this bulletin, the human rights and security situation was reported as follows: at least 6 people were killed, including 4

found dead, 1 victim of SGBV, 4 victims of arbitrary arrest of Ugandan nationals and 4 people injured.

Members of political parties were not spared by these violations. A member of UPRONA party was killed and found dead.

Imbonerakure, administrative officials, police and military personnel are singled out as alleged perpetrators of most of these human rights violations.

I. CONTEXT

I.1. POLITICAL CONTEXT

Speech by the President of the Republic of Burundi in Bugabira province, Kirundo province

The Burundian President Evariste Ndayishimiye warned Rwanda that it was a “bad neighbor” while visiting Bugabira commune, Kirundo province, on February 11, 2025. He declared that Burundi would retaliate against any attack, recalling the historic wars between the two countries in the 18th century.

President Ndayishimiye also referred to the origin of the name of Kirundo province, which is said to be linked to a battle in 1763 in which Rwandans were killed. He indicated that Burundi will not allow Rwanda to defeat it, as was the case during colonial times. The President also accused Rwanda of keeping young refugees and arming them to use them in the war in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). He asserted that Burundi will not allow Rwanda to destabilize the region, and that war will be generalized if necessary.

It is important to note that these statements come in a context of growing tensions in a region marked by persistent instability, notably in the East of the DRC, and where Burundi is heavily involved with over 10,000 soldiers deployed as part of the TAFOC mission. This speech by President Evariste Ndayishimiye seems to testify to a clear desire to prepare the population for a possible confrontation with Rwanda, while reinforcing a sense of national vigilance. If this speech is interpreted by Rwanda as an explicit threat, it could have multiple consequences, including the exacerbation of regional ten-

sions and a new military escalation in an already fragile region.

During his visit, the President distributed 15 kg of maize and 5 kg of rice to each household.

World Food Program representative expelled from Burundi

The President of Burundi recently warned of a possible war in the region due to the attitude of Rwanda, which continues to train Burundian refugees and prepare them for war in the East of the Democratic Republic of Congo. This statement was made at a New Year's ceremony in Bujumbura, in the presence of diplomatic corps.

Following this speech, high-level authorities organized information meetings across the country to raise awareness among the Burundian population. In particular, the Minister of the Interior visited border provinces to meet governors and local populations.

The President also visited Kirundo province, where he recalled the historic wars between Rwanda and Burundi during the reign of the Mwami. He stressed that Burundi had never been defeated by Rwanda, and that this was not the time to allow it.

During this tense context, the Burundian government decided to expel the World Food Program (WFP) representative in Burundi, as well as its security officer. The accusations against them are based on messages sent to their staff, encouraging

them to stock up on food, water and money in anticipation of a possible attack.

This decision was seen as irrational and an attempt to find scapegoats. The situation remains tense between Rwanda and Burundi, and there is no guarantee that attacks will not occur at any time, particularly in view of the M23's progress towards South Kivu and Burundi's involvement in this war, which the M23 considers to be its second belligerent alongside Kinshasa.

Election of two CVR new commissioners

On February 13, 2025, the National Assembly of Burundi elected two new commissioners of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (CVR), replacing Noé Clément Ninziza and Aloys Batungwanayo, who were forced to resign. They are Bishop Aimé Joseph Kimararungu, bishop of the Anglican Church of Gitega, elected vice-president of the CVR, and Vianney Ndikumana, head of staff of the governor of Kayanza province, appointed member of this commission. From the elections, Bishop Kimararungu obtained 93 votes out of 113, while Ndikumana received 84 votes. These replacements were motivated by accusations of collaboration with foreign powers: Noé Clément Ninziza was accused of supposed links with Rwanda, because of his Tutsi ethnic group and his relations with some churches in Rwanda and Uganda, while Aloys Batungwanayo was suspected of collaboration with Westerners.

Other sources say that they would be victims of opposing the President of the Republic of Burundi by putting forward the request for the qualification of the 1972 genocide by the NU while the latter had refused to sign a related decree as requested by some Hutu extremists. It should be noted that this request was presented to the NU when Vice-President Noé Clément Ninziza, was acting as the temporary President of the CVR.

According to the regulatory procedures to replace commissioners¹, the National Assembly proceeded with this election after shortlisting six candidates

from the fifteen files submitted. The shortlisted candidates were Gérard Mfuranzima, Vianney Ndikumana, Dionise Arakaza, Bishop Aimé Joseph Kimararungu, Godefroid Masikini and Léopold Kabura.

The independence of the CVR commissioners raises crucial questions on their impartiality and their ability to carry out their mission independently². The accusations against some commissioners, such as Noé Clément Ninziza and Aloys Batungwanayo, illustrate the political interference in the activities of the CVR, where public relations among the responsibilities of the commissioners and ethnic affiliations seem to play a major role in the decision to dismiss or appoint its members. The existence of such political pressure on the commissioners may question their independence, risking transforming the CVR into an instrument serving government interests rather than a truly objective and independent body. Such a situation could undermine the credibility of the commission and public confidence in its findings and reports, which are essential for reconciliation and truth for the Burundian people.

Concerns of election rigging: opposition parties point the finger at CENI and local administrators in Cibitoke province

Opposition parties in Burundi are concerned about possible electoral fraud in Cibitoke province. They accuse the Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI) and local administrators of favoring the ruling party, CNDD-FDD. The opposition parties denounce in particular the composition of the provincial electoral commissions (CEPI), which are allegedly composed exclusively of CNDD-FDD members.

They fear that this situation will allow the registration of children or foreigners on the electoral lists, and that the electoral register will be biased. A SAHWANYA FRODEBU party leader said that foreign voters and minors under 18 easily obtained

¹Law No. 1/11 of May 28, 2024, establishing the creation, mandate, composition, organization and operation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, article 31.

²Law No. 1/11 of May 28, 2024, article 10.

national identity cards with the complicity of the local administration.

The CENI and local administrators are accused of facilitating voter registration to favor the ruling party. Opposition parties believe that this undermines the credibility of the elections and creates a high risk of rigging.

Worrying preparations for Burundi's 2025 elections

In Burundi, the electoral process is underway, with the verification of voter lists now complete. However, concerns persist about the transparency and credibility of these elections. Some Burundians are wondering how the elections will be conducted, given the preparations underway. Others are worried about the real situation during the election campaign and on election day, as hate speech is starting to emerge.

There are reports of two individuals, Aloys Mbayahaga and a "political scientist", who are spouting hate speech through a WhatsApp group. They even dared to declare that there would be peace in Burundi after exterminating all CNL party members. This is particularly worrying, as it suggests that political tensions could escalate into violence.

It is essential that the Burundian authorities take measures to prevent hate speech and ensure the safety of all citizens, regardless of their political affiliation. The international community must also remain vigilant and call on stakeholders to respect the principles of democracy and the rule of law.

1.2. JUDICIAL CONTEXT

Appearance of former Prime Minister Alain Guillaume Bunyoni before the Cassation Chamber of the Supreme Court

Before the itinerant judges at Gitega central prison on February 14, 2025, General Alain Guillaume Bunyoni, sentenced to life imprisonment, requested that his judgment be reviewed in order to reopen his case. During his hearing, Bunyoni requested provisional release due to his precarious state of health, including advanced type 2 blood sugar. He also denounced the inhumane prison conditions he has endured for more than two years.

Ban on renting houses to Congolese refugees in Burundi

The situation in Burundi is increasingly tense due to the massive influx of Congolese refugees fleeing war in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The Burundian authorities have recently taken new security measures to try to control the situation.

These measures mainly concern house rentals and accommodation of people. Here are the main provisions:

* **Mandatory declaration:** Any rental or search for housing must be reported to the head of ten households or the hill head.

* **Required documents:** Tenants must present their old household book, a letter signed by administrative authorities and a certificate of residence issued by the administrator of their commune of origin.

* **Ban on rental to refugees :** Renting housing to refugees is strictly prohibited, as reception centers are provided for this purpose. Offenders will be considered as criminals.

* **Declaration of accommodation :** Any person hosting another person must inform the administration. Failure to comply with this obligation will be considered as an offence.

These measures are intended to strengthen security and control the arrival of refugees, but they also risk complicating the lives of refugees and those hosting them. The situation remains tense and requires special attention from the authorities and the international community.

His lawyer, Lawyer Placide Gatoto, supported him in his requests. However, the public prosecutor retorted that health rights are respected in prisons and that Bunyoni benefits from regular medical examinations.

The Supreme Court, presided by Gamaliel Nkurunziza, indicated that the decision on provisional release will be rendered within 48 hours, while the verdict on the cassation of the judgment will be pronounced within 60 days.

A prison sentence in Kayanza province

On February 11, 2025, the Kayanza High Court sentenced Déo Nkurunziza, a driver residing in Ryirengeye hill, Kayanza commune and province, to 20 years in prison and a fine of five million. He was found guilty of raping a 12-year-old minor, Happy Kezimana, a student at Kirema primary school.

According to reports, the victim's mother, Mbonim-

1.3. HUMANITARIAN CONTEXT

More than 8,000 Congolese fleeing fighting find refuge in Rugombo commune, Cibitoke province

About 8,000 Congolese nationals have taken refuge in Cibitoke province since 14 February 2025, fleeing intense fighting in several localities in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). These refugees are requesting urgent humanitarian assistance, including food, tents, latrines and water.

The refugees are fleeing clashes between M23 rebels and the Congolese army, supported by Burundian soldiers and members of Wazalendo. They are concerned about the M23's progress towards Uvira, near Bujumbura. The refugees are seeking asylum from the Burundian authorities while waiting for the situation in the DRC to stabilize.

The administrator of Rugombo has confirmed the influx of refugees and plans to work with humanitarian organizations to provide assistance, including food, medical supplies and accommodation. A transit site in Cishemere is already in place.

Lieutenant-Colonel Ezéchiél Ndiwokubwayo, commander of the 112th Infantry Battalion in Cibitoke, also confirms the arrival of the refugees and ensures that security is assured along Rusizi River. Those who cross Gatumba border are grouped at Gatumba military camp, while wealthier people rent houses in Bujumbura.

These refugees also want to be allowed to rent houses or be hosted by Burundian families. However, the Governor of Cibitoke Province, Carême Bizozwa, has banned the population of Cibitoke from hosting Congolese refugees in their homes.

The refugees are currently grouped in different lo-

pa Godefride, discovered compromising messages on her daughter's phone on February 4, 2024, and immediately alerted the public prosecutor, Isaac Ningabira. This led to the arrest of Déo Nkurunziza.

At the trial, Happy Kezimana testified that Déo Nkurunziza had deceived her by promising her a ten thousand franc note for transport. This case raises concerns about the safety of children and the need to strengthen protection measures against sexual abuse.

cations, including Rugombo commune stadium, Karurama site, the deaf-mute school in Cibitoke, Buganda communal office and Ndava. The Governor has requested tents for refugee shelters and food aid, and has called on benefactors to contribute to the creation of a transit camp.

The Congolese refugees reject the Governor's claims that there are no houses burning in the DRC and that the gunfire heard is that of the FARDC shooting at thieves. They are demanding respect for their right to asylum and refuse to return to their country because of the ongoing violence and fighting.

"Humanitarian tragedy": 15 Congolese refugees drowned in Rusizi while seeking refuge

At least 15 Congolese refugees died in Rusizi River between 15 and 16 February 2025, while trying to flee intense fighting between the M23 and the Congolese army in South Kivu, the refugees said. They came from localities such as Kamanyola, Rusiga, Luberizi and Bwegera, where clashes are raging.

The residents are fleeing gunfire, looting and abuses committed by the military and their Wazalendo allies. Some refugees have managed to cross the border and are currently in Burundi, where they are calling for lasting peace in their country before returning home.

The Burundian authorities have put in place measures to accommodate Congolese refugees, particularly in the communes of Rugombo and Buganda, in Cibitoke province, as well as in Gihanga commune, Bubanza province. However, they ask refugees to take precautions before fleeing.

1.4. SECURITY CONTEXT

Searches and arrests of foreigners in Burundi

Searches and arrests were carried out in Burundi, particularly in Mukaza commune in Bujumbura, on 13, 14 and 15 February 2025. Some twenty people, mainly Congolese Banyamulenge, were arrested, mistreated and stripped of their property, despite having valid residence documents.

These targeted arrests also took place in Rohero, Ngagara, Mutakura and Cibitoke quarters, as well as in hotels in the capital. Hundreds of Congolese, with or without papers, were arrested and taken in police trucks to the secondary technical school "ETS" in Kamenge for a verification of residence papers. In most cases, some were released, like students, other people doing business without papers were returned, others found to be refugees were taken to the refugee registration centers of Gihanga in Bubanza, Makombe in Rumonge. The exact number of people arrested in these roundups is not yet known, but it is estimated at more than four hundred and some of them were taken to unknown locations.

Victims' relatives fear for the safety of their loved ones, while there are reports of mistreatment and disappearances. Traffic at Gatumba border is also disrupted, with difficulties for Burundians to travel to the DRC. The Banyamulenge, a Congolese Tutsi community, are reportedly victims of discrimination and violence because of their ethnicity. They denounce injustice and systematic marginalization, despite having the necessary documents to live in Burundi.

A security meeting in Rumonge commune and province of

The governor of Rumonge province, Léonard Niyonsaba, organized a security meeting on February 14, 2025, in collaboration with the provincial police commissioner, to raise awareness among hotel and guest house owners, communal administrators, zone heads and decentralized service heads on the potential risks related to the electoral period and the security situation in the Great Lakes region, particularly in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

At the meeting, the governor warned participants against potential infiltration by troublemakers who might be hiding in hotels, while the provincial secretary of the ruling party reiterated the importance of vigilance, citing the example of Magara, where a person sheltered two Ugandans without informing local authorities.

Search and roundups in hotels, in Bugarama commune, Rumonge province

On February 13, 2025, the police of Bugarama communal police station and the EMS of Rumonge CP conducted a search and roundup operation in hotels in Magara, Magara zone, Bugarama commune and Rumonge province. The objective was to track down illegal immigrants and any object likely to disrupt security.

The operation led to the arrest of four Ugandans, including John Gabula, Hillary Balijuka Gahwa, Robert Ajuna and Enock Kasaija, who were accompanied by three Burundians: Christella Kaneza, Bizi Mugisha and Blaise Nshimirimana. They were arrested in a hotel called Dream Hotel.

In addition, two couples not registered in the register were arrested: Raïssa Niyokwizera and Nicodème Mvukabanka, as well as Angélique Nivyayo and Thierry Hatungimana. Another couple, Francine Nkeshimana and Ameni Mpawenayo, were also arrested, but Ameni managed to escape.

Five additional people were arrested for not having a national identity card: Ornella Shurveryimana, Méthoucela Nishimwe, Eric Ndayisaba, Pères Nsengiyumva and Désiré Sibomana. They were sentenced to an administrative fine.

In-depth investigations have already begun concerning these foreigners, under the direction of OPJ Gérard Nitereka.

Distribution of weapons to the Imbonerakure in Cibitoke province

Information received by Ligue Iteka on February 15, 2025, reporting a worrying situation prevailing in Cibitoke province, where the night presence of the Imbonerakure, the youth of the ruling party, is

sowing fear among the population. According to witnesses, these young people, armed and dressed in military uniforms, patrol at night, creating fear and insecurity.

The inhabitants of the region consider the Imbonerakure as a source of unrest and insecurity. However, the commander of Cibitoke camp denies these allegations, suggesting that the population may have confused the Imbonerakure with soldiers. He calls on the population to remain calm and trust the security forces.

The distribution of weapons and military uniforms to the Imbonerakure in the communes of Mugina, Mabayi, Rugombo and Buganda bordering Rwanda and the DRC is causing serious concern.

According to information from young people from this ruling party, this operation, which began this Friday, February 14, 2025, also concerns former combatants from the former CNDD-FDD rebellion.

Residents fear outbursts and thefts by individuals holding weapons illegally. Local authorities categorically reject these accusations and call on the population to denounce anyone disturbing public order.

Meeting of former soldiers of Giharo commune, Rutana province

On 9 February 2025, a meeting was held at CNDD-FDD party headquarters in Giharo, Rutana province. This meeting, led by Rénovât Hakizima, communal representative of Musongati, and other local representatives, targeted demobilized soldiers and non-commissioned officers. The key points discussed were: i) intensify night training on known grounds, ii) support the conflict between the FARDC and the M23 in the Democratic Republic of Congo, iii) not to be afraid to go to the DRC, because Rwanda will attack Burundi after the fall of the DRC, iv) wait carefully for the signal from the higher authorities of the party, v) keep confidential and no longer inform the families of the case, who will be informed of further developments.

Manhunt of Congolese and Rwandans in Buhiga commune, Karuzi province

On February 12, 2025, at Buhiga center, Buhiga zone and commune, Karuzi province, four Congolese and Rwandan residents of this center including Mwamba Kabelu Alexandre residing on Rwingoma hill and Asende Faizi Washaba and Byale Honnore residing on Buhiga hill were summoned to Buhiga zone by Guillaume, communal commissioner, in the company of Buhiga zone head Phocas Sindaruhuka. According to eyewitnesses from Buhiga center, they were asked for their papers and the reasons for being in Buhiga and they were allowed to return. According to the same witnesses, three are former Congolese teachers who came to teach at Buhiga High School before the 1993 crisis and a Rwandan woman who is married to a Burundian. The latter have been known in the commune for a long time.

Fear after President's visit to Kirundo province

On February 11, 2025, Ntega hill, Bugabira commune, Kirundo province, President of the Republic Evariste Ndayishimiye, whose mission was to provide food aid to vulnerable households affected by famine, reminded the population of this commune to ensure that the closest enemy (Rwanda) does not destabilize Burundi. According to eyewitnesses, he asked to prepare for war so that Rwanda is defeated in the war that will oppose Burundi and Rwanda. In these words, "*Rwanda must remember the wars of kings of past years that it has never defeated.*" He then added that the population of Kirundo will be supported by all the provinces of Burundi and asked to control the movement of unknown persons.

Since February 13, 2025 in all communes such as those of Kirundo commune, security measures have been taken by communal administrative authorities.

According to a communique dated February 14, 2025 relayed in WhatsApp groups launched by the administrator of Kirundo commune, motorcyclists are requested to close work at 8 p.m. and bars will be closed at 10 p.m. Hotels are requested to ensure that visitors are registered with their identity documents and family visitors are requested to notify the local administrators.

1.4.1. PERSONS KILLED BY UNIDENTIFIED PEOPLE

A body of a sister found in Nyanza lac commune, Makamba province

Information received by Ligue Iteka on February 13, 2025 indicates that on February 7, 2025 at Buheka Catholic parish located on the same Buheka hill in Kazirabageni zone, Nyanza lac commune, Makamba province, a body of Sister Claudine Kumbwimana, aged 32, from Ruvumu hill, Kayokwe commune in Mwaro province was found hanged using a rope suspended from her bunk bed in her room. According to the priest of this parish, Jean Claude Ciza, the victim's room was closed for two days and out of fear he called the local administration and the police to break down the door of her room to establish the facts. Her body was found hanging on a rope. No writing or other item indicating the reason for his suicide was found.

A body found in Vugizo commune, Makamba province

Information received by Ligue Iteka on February 13, 2025 indicates that on February 7, 2025 on Gahandu hill, Gishiha zone, Vugizo commune, Makamba province, a body of Albin Ndayitwayeko, a mathematics teacher at Gahandu communal high school of Vugizo communal education department was found at his home hanging with a rope.

According to some neighbors close to the victim, the relations between the late Albin and his wife were not good, she too is a primary school teacher. For both, the medical service made expert assessments before confirmation by the judicial police of the police station of Nyanza lac and Vugizo communes. The burial was organized on Gahandu hill.

A body of UPRONA party member found in Songa commune, Bururi province

On February 10, 2025, a body of Charles Karikuru-

bu, a member of UPRONA, a 61-year-old military retiree who had just retired once again from ETS Kiryama where he was a driver, from Gwego hill, Kiryama zone in Songa commune, Bururi province, was found in a swamp at the bottom of Kiryama Secondary Technical School on Kiryama hill, in the same commune.

According to witnesses, the victim had disappeared 2 weeks ago and his body was found with an arm almost completely cut off and many injuries to his head. He was buried the same day at Mwungo cemetery on Kiryama hill by his family under the orders of Songa communal administration since his body was already decomposing. But after the burial, his wife was directly arrested by the police. The perpetrators of this crime are not known.

A body found in Gihanga commune, Bubanza province

On February 10, 2025, a body of David Nitunga, working to a mill near the market, was found in Gihanga commune city, in Bubanza province, near the market, according to local authorities.

According to information on site, Nitunga was in a bar at night. On his way back, he reportedly encountered Imbonerakure on patrol who ordered him not to scream before suffocating him. He reportedly died instantly. The friend who was with him managed to escape, but was unable to identify the perpetrators of the attack. The owner of the mill, when contacted, stated that Nitunga had no known problems with other people. The victim's relatives are calling for investigations to be conducted to determine the reasons for this assassination and for those responsible to be punished in accordance with the law. The police went to the scene for findings. Investigations have begun, according to administrative sources, who added that the victim had no visible injuries on his body.

1.4.2. OTHER SECURITY FACTS

Five fishermen thunder struck, one dead in Nyanza-Lac commune, Makamba province

On February 11, 2025, at around 10 a.m., on Mugerama hill, Nyanza-Lac commune, Makamba province, Casimile Nduwimana, single, fisherman, from Musugi hill, Kiyenzi commune, Bujumbura Rural province, was thunder struck with his four colleagues while returning to Mugerama fishing bank. They were struck by a thunder too strong leaving one dead and 2 injured all rescued by the fishermen of other boats to take them to the district hospital of Nyanza-lac but Casimile had already died on the spot.

A young man killed in Rumonge commune and province

On February 13, 2025, on Karagara hill, Rumonge commune and province, Emery, aged 17, succumbed after being injured by his father. According to eyewitnesses, this young boy fought with his father named Hakizimana on the night of February 12, 2025. The same witnesses say that the latter reproached his son for absence to school for unexplained reasons. The same witnesses added that the victim's mother was unable to help him after being beaten by his father. Angry, the neighbors refused to allow the young teenager to be buried before the alleged perpetrator of the crime was arrested and tried.

A person almost killed by a police officer, in Giharo commune, Rutana province

On February 10, 2025, around 9 p.m., an incident occurred at "Chez Siriro" bar in Kurubaho, Giharo commune, Rutana province. Pacifique, a police officer from Giharo position, tried to take Kabura Jonas' motorcycle, but the latter resisted.

Witnesses, including Sylvestre Hatungimana, director of ECOFO Murembera, intervened to prevent Pacifique from taking the motorcycle. They suspected that the police officer wanted to extort money from Jonas, as often happens with local police officers.

Faced with resistance, Pacifique fired his rifle into the air, causing those present to flee. No one was injured. The police officer eventually took the motorcycle away, but was arrested and jailed in Giharo cell by OPJ Déo. He was released the next day after returning the motorcycle to its owner.

Theft in Ruyigi commune and province

Information received by Ligue Iteka on February 10, 2025 indicates that on the night of February 8, 2025, in Ruyigi province city Hussein, a resident of Sanzu III quarter, aged about 25, was arrested stealing corn from a field belonging to the Militant Sisters of Ruyigi. According to sources on site, he was caught by a night watchman at around at 9 p.m. On February 9, 2025 and was taken to Ruyigi police for legal proceedings.

II. CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS

II.1. RIGHT TO LIFE

A person killed in Buganda commune, Cibitoke province

On the night of 9 to 10 February 2025, a man was killed on Gasenyi hill, Buganda commune, Cibitoke province.

According to information on site, the youth of CNDD-FDD party are being singled out as being behind this murder, and four of them have been arrested. The population is demanding that all light be shed on this case and that those responsible be brought to justice. The Cibitoke prosecutor called

for calm and assured that investigations are continuing.

According to a witness present at the scene, Salvator Ngendakuma was surprised in his sleep at his concubine's home, who no longer lived with her husband. The latter is said to have entrusted the mission to Imbonerakure who allegedly hammered him before slaughtering him with a knife. Residents contacted on site described a horrible death and demanded severe sanctions for the perpetrators of this crime.

The prosecutor at Cibitoke TGI indicated that ongoing investigations have already led to the arrest of four alleged perpetrators, all members of CNDD-FDD party, as well as the main initiator. He called on the population to remain calm and assured that sanctions in accordance with the law will be applied against those responsible. He also announced that a flagrante delicto trial is being prepared.

A teacher nearly killed in Bubanza commune and province

On February 12, 2025, on Giko hill, Bubanza commune and province, Boniface Ndayishimiye, a tea-

cher at Gatsira primary school, Muramba zone, Bubanza commune and province, was nearly killed by Imbonerakure because of his ethnicity. According to eyewitnesses, this teacher was returning as usual to Bubanza commune city from work and was blocked by two young Imbonerakure who prevented him from continuing, accusing him of being of Tutsi ethnicity and that he should therefore be killed. The same witnesses added that Boniface Ndayishimiye was rescued by women who were nearby and who shouted demanding that he not be killed. The teacher was able to escape following a crowd of people who mobilized. These citizens demand that Imbonerakure who behave in this way be corrected.

II.2. RIGHT TO PHYSICAL INTEGRITY

II.2.1. SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Attempted rape in Songa commune, Bururi province

The information received by Ligue Iteka on 2 November 2025 indicates that on February 6, 2025, around 9 a.m., Désiré Nkurunziza, aged 28, a farmer, from Yengero hill, Songa commune, Bururi province, was arrested in the company of a young girl named D.I, aged 14. She is a 7th grade student at ECOFO Yengero. According to an eyewitness,

Nkurunziza had invited the victim to his home, located near the school. As he tried to undress her, the victim shouted, alerting her classmates who intervened.

Medical examinations revealed that there was no sexual intercourse, but that there was an attempted rape. Nkurunziza was arrested by the police and jailed in Kabezi provincial cell.

II.3. RIGHT TO FREEDOM

II.3.1. ARBITRARY ARRESTS

Four Ugandan nationals arrested in Bugarama commune, Rumonge province

On 13 February 2025, in one of the hotels in Magara centre, Bugarama commune, Rumonge province, Cabura John aged 24, Balijuka Hillary Gahwa, aged 29, Ajuna Robert aged 26 and Kasaija Enock aged 23 were arrested by the police. According to witnesses, a policewoman confirmed this arrest made

during a search for irregular migrants in these hotels in Magara. Investigations are still underway at the judicial police in Bugarama for more information on the reasons for their presence in Magara. It should be noted that these Ugandans had entered regularly with a valid passport and visa. They are jailed in the communal police station cell in Bugarama.

II.3.2. DEPRIVATION OF FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT

Two European tourists mistreated in Makamba commune and province

On February 10, 2025, two young Europeans, including a Dutch woman and a Portuguese man, who were sightseeing on Murango hill in Makamba commune and province where they camped, were mistreated by Imbonerakure. They spent the night from Monday to Tuesday under observation by the Imbonerakure. According to administrative and police sources, these Europeans arrived in Makamba

commune and province the day before. As indicated by their visas, they passed through several sub-region countries on a tourist trip. When they arrived in Makamba commune, they went to set up their tent on Murango hill where they wanted to spend their night. The CNDD-FDD leader on this hill took them into custody all night from Monday to Tuesday. The latter accused them of going on a tourist trip to the hills overlooking Makamba city without authorization.

According to sources on this hill located less than 3 kilometers from Makamba center, these Imbonerakure alerted the population, which caused both the residents and the two young tourists to spend the night without sleeping. Police officers from Makamba communal police station went to secure them late at night. On the morning of February 10, 2025, all the institutions including the attorney general at Makamba Court of Appeal, the prosecutor and administrative authorities met on this hill before bringing them back to Makamba under interrogation before the regional police commissioner Jérôme Ntibibogora.

In messages relayed in the groups of CNDD-FDD party members, some accused them of spying for Europeans and Rwanda. Some even went so far as to ask that they be tortured to explain their real mission in Burundi. After interrogation, the two young Europeans explained that wherever they went in East Africa, they were not worried except on Burundian soil. They were released and these authorities asked them to notify their destination for their safety. Tourism professionals explain that the situation that happened to the two Europeans may prevent tourists from visiting our country fearing for their safety.

II.4. RIGHT TO PARTICIPATION TO POLITICAL LIFE

Political intolerance and electoral tensions in Rumonge

A worrying incident occurred on February 10, 2025 in Rumonge, where a UPRONA party flag was burned by unidentified individuals, suspected of being Imbonerakure. According to witnesses, the perpetrators tore down the flag, uprooted the pole and burned the party symbol. The remains of the flag were left on an oil palm branch next to UPRONA party office.

The office in question was offered by a member of UPRONA party, who is also the deputy provincial representative of Rumonge and is at the top of the communal list for the upcoming elections.

Sources within UPRONA party in Rumonge denounce acts of political intolerance and suspect the young Imbonerakure of CNDD-FDD party from Kanyenkoko quarter of being responsible for this incident.

David Mukanya, national vice-president of UPRONA party and from Rumonge, went to the scene and strongly condemned this act of political intolerance. He asked the authorities to open an investigation to identify and punish those responsible for this heinous act. Mukanya is a prominent figure in UPRONA party, which celebrated its 61st anniversary in 2023 in Gitega

Intimidating songs in Bugendana commune, Gitega province

Intimidating songs were heard in Bugendana com-

mune, Gitega province, on February 15, 2025. The Imbonerakure, the youth wing of the ruling CNDD-FDD party, organized sports activities on Mukoro hill, officially to go to Cunywe and help build a school. However, they sang intimidating songs against those who are not members of CNDD-FDD party.

These songs contain threatening messages, such as "We know the hypocrites", "Whether you like it or not, we will rule", "Evariste remains the driver" and "If you are not comfortable, go to Kagome's (Kagame)". These songs are worrying and raise fears of a rise in political tension in the region.

The CNDD-FDD hill and zone heads were present at this event, which raises questions about their involvement in these intimidating chants. The situation is all the more worrying as elections are approaching and political tension is already high in the country.

Election campaigns in schools in Muramvya commune

On February 11, 2025, around 2 p.m., a team of two Imbonerakure, Émile Ndayisenga and Nicaise Habonimana, visited Muramvya communal high school located in Muramvya commune and province for two political missions. According to school sources, the two Imbonerakure waited until the end of classes (1:50 p.m.) and entered the school in collusion with school authorities. The same sources reported that they gathered all the students and asked the class delegates to draw up a list of those who have receipts and present it the next day.

They also strongly urged students to vote for CNDD-FDD in the upcoming elections, warning that anyone who did not comply would be recorded by hidden cameras in the polling booths. Furthermore, these sources indicated that students were not allowed to ask questions. In conclusion, the two Imbonerakure invited students to participate in the “show of force” organized by CNDD-FDD scheduled for Saturday, February 22, 2025, at Muramvya stadium.

Errors in the electoral lists for the 2025 elections

In Kinyinya commune, Ruyigi province: from February 10 to 15, 2025, the lists of voters for the 2025 elections were posted. However, several irregularities were reported, including i) At ECOFO Vyizigira, a registration file for a registration unit was lost. The officers decided to re-register those who were not on the list but had receipts. ii) Similar problems were observed at ECOFO Vumwe, where officers were waiting for instructions from higher authorities. iii) At ECOFO Kabanga, fictitious names were included on the lists intended to be posted at Lycée Kabanga.

In Butezi commune, Ruyigi province, according to information received on 14 February 2025, Butezi commune faced challenges with the public posting of candidate lists on the electoral rolls. The lists were not publicly posted at ECOFO Kwisumo and ECOFO Nkongwe due to concerns about rain damage. Despite awareness-raising efforts, residents did not come to verify the lists.

In Bweru commune, Ruyigi province, as reported on 15 February 2025, errors such as misspelled names and incorrect identity card numbers were identified on the voters' lists.

In Butaganzwa commune, Ruyigi province, a report dated 15 February 2025 indicated that the errors included misspelled names and swapped identification numbers. In addition, some names appeared twice and addresses were listed incorrectly (e.g., “Businde” instead of “Bisinde”) at various ECOFO centres.

In Nyabitsinda commune, Ruyigi province, as of 15 February 2025, Nyabitsinda reported various errors including misspelled names, parental names, dates of birth and incorrect identification numbers, including

at ECOFO Nyagitika and ECOFO Kirungu. In addition, deceased persons were still on the voters' list.

In Gisuru commune, Ruyigi province, reports dated 15 February 2025, indicated spelling mistakes, incorrect identification numbers, and inaccurate parents' names and dates of birth in Ruyigi and Gisuru communes.

In Cankuzo commune and province, reports dated 15 February 2025 revealed that at Gitibu center, 412 registered candidates were missing from the lists. The loss of the unit's registration file made it difficult for officials to re-register them.

Display of the electoral list in Gisagara commune, Cankuzo province

According to information received on 15 February 2025, the electoral lists were posted in Gisagara commune. However, a group of young members of CNDD-FDD party monitored each center to ensure that their loyal members were included on the lists.

In Kigamba, Mishiha and Cendajuru communes, Cankuzo province, on 15 February 2025, errors were noted in the lists of these communes. Many names were missing in Kigamba, raising concerns about the integrity of the elections. In Mishiha, one of the officials present was a representative of CNDD-FDD, raising concerns about neutrality.

Intimidation of opposition party members in Butaganzwa commune, Ruyigi province

On 13 February 2025, in Muriza zone of Butaganzwa, a provincial secretary of CNDD-FDD held a meeting urging party members to ensure electoral victory. The meeting was punctuated by degrading remarks against opposition members. Disruption of school activities in Kigamba commune, Cankuzo province. On 14 February 2025, a CNDD-FDD rally disrupted school activities due to a parade of party members.

Intimidation in Cankuzo commune and province

On 13 February, youth from Imbonerakure youth league from Musenyi and Cankuzo hills participated in a football match. The Cankuzo hill team won with a score of 1 goal to 0.

On 15 February, at 4 a.m., youth from Imbonerakure youth league gathered at the roundabout in Cankuzo commune city for sport. During the event, songs were sung, some containing insults against the Rwandan president. After the sport, participants headed to the volleyball court to receive instructions on the election period as members of the ruling party.

In addition, another meeting was held at CNDD-FDD party communal office, led by Valérie Seshahu, provincial representative of the women's league in Buhumuza province. The purpose of this meeting was to prepare a trip to Muyinga to attend the official reception of the houses built by CNDD-FDD party for the vulnerable members of their party.

UPRONA and CNL members intimidated by Imbonerakure in Cankuzo province

Information received by Ligue Iteka indicates that on February 3, 2024, Boniface Banyiyezako, governor of Cankuzo province, held a meeting with representatives of political parties to discuss the attitude of political parties in the upcoming 2025 elections. The governor urged party leaders to guide their supporters to ensure peaceful coexistence, respect for others and to avoid irresponsible actions such as insults, conflicts and intimidation. Representatives of CNDD-FDD, UPRONA, RPB Nturinganywe, CODEBU, and CNL were present.

The governor reported hearing of cases where UPRONA members were intimidated by Imbonerakure and CNDD-FDD members in Gisagara. He invited UPRONA representatives Birahanyi Ferdinand and Léopold Hakizimana to give examples, and they confirmed the intimidation. CNDD-FDD party members approached UPRONA candidates, pressuring them to withdraw their candidacies and join their party, thus aiming for exclusive domination within the communal council. This intimidation occurred in Bumba and Camazi hills, while Muheba from UPRONA noted similar threats in Cendajuru on Twinkwavu hill.

Daniel, who led UPRONA in Mishiha, also reported threats to join CNDD-FDD. A week before the February 3 2025 meeting, these incidents were reported to Olivier Nkurunziza, the national presi-

dent of UPRONA, who in turn informed the Minister of Interior and Public Security, Niteretse Martin. The minister urgently convened a meeting with representatives of national political parties and provincial governors to discuss guidelines before, during, and after the elections. At the meeting, it was revealed that a list of 50 UPRONA candidates was created to intimidate those on the list urging them to join CNDD-FDD. Meanwhile, Deo Nsavyimana, a representative of CNL party, said his life was in danger after he was attacked by Imbonerakure in Kigamba. Miburo Sylvere, a local CNDD-FDD leader, accused him of clinging to Agathon Rwasa's ideas.

Local administrators and CNDD-FDD representatives acknowledged being aware of these intimidation tactics and committed to informing their supporters. Cimpaye Lydia, a UPRONA member of Hutu ethnicity, also faced threats and intimidation because of her political affiliation, including during a meeting organized by CNDD-FDD aimed at intimidating her on February 9, 2025.

Forced contributions in Cankuzo province

In the newly formed Gisagara commune, Mishiha, and Cendajuru, forced financial contributions were demanded from households and businesses to support festive events. The ruling party, CNDD-FDD, demands from them a forced contribution of 2,000 Bif per household and more for traders and civil servants a contribution between 10,000 Bif and 20,000 Bif depending on the category, to support the show of force ceremonies planned for February 15, 2025, at ECOFO ground in Gitwenge, starting from 10 a.m. These forced collections are made by Japhet Nzirubusa, communal secretary of CNDD-FDD in Gisagara commune, at the same time the director of Murore high school.

Intimidation of opposition parties in Musongati commune, Rutana province

On 16 February 2025, a general assembly of CNDD-FDD party members was held on Kabingo hill in the current Giharo quarter of Musongati commune, Rutana province, led by provincial leader Sylvain Nzikoruriho in the new Burunga province. Participants included CNDD-FDD party representatives in Burunga and other authorities from the former

from the former Rutana and Makamba provinces.

A parade of nearly 4 km long was held, featuring various groups such as Imbonerakure youth with political slogans, Abakenyerarugamba women dancing, and performances by the Kung-fu Club. The day also welcomed new party members.

The agenda included items such as love for CNDD-FDD party, monitoring of members from other parties especially UPRONA, URUNANI “Burundi bwa BOSE”, encouraging voter registration, supporting community activities, engaging with opposition members and strengthening unity within the party to correct deviant behavior.

Hunting of non-CNDD-FDD members in Buhiga commune, Karuzi province

On February 11, 2025, on Rwingoma hill, Buhiga zone and commune, Karuzi province, a CNDD-FDD party meeting was held to which civil servants residing on this hill were invited, in which former Minister Jean Marie Nibirantije was present. According to witnesses present at the meeting, before closing it, he asked the participants if there were people who were not yet CNDD-FDD members and asked to draw up lists for each household. According to the same witnesses, he stressed that they will confront them and ask them if they are not mentally disabled or if they do not have another brain abnormality. They added that those who do not join CNDD-FDD are madmen to be treated to Legentil. The meeting was led by the leader of CNDD-FDD on this hill named Révérien, a teacher at Lycée de l'espérance of Buhiga.

III. ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

III.1. DISRUPTION OF ECONOMIC LIFE

Disruption of fuel supply in Cibitoke province

Two weeks after the fall of Goma, general panic led to several changes in Burundi, particularly in the communes of Cibitoke province.

Fuel prices in Cibitoke are rising after a decline observed three weeks ago. This fluctuation is influenced by various factors, including fuel supply, cross-border traffic and security tensions in border areas. Cibitoke province depends on its neighbors, the DRC and Rwanda, for its fuel supply, with 70% coming from the DRC and 20% from Rwanda. Any disruption in supply leads to an increase in prices. Traffickers play a role in fuel supply, although their activities are sometimes disrupted by security operations. In early January, traffickers were killed, leading to a drop in prices following an informal order from the Prime Minister allowing traffickers to operate freely. Military reinforcements and Imbonerakure were deployed to the communes bordering Rwanda and the DRC, raising concerns about armed incursions. These tensions have also disrupted fuel supplies and led to price increases. The increase in fuel prices has a direct impact on the

lives of the population, affecting transport costs, the prices of necessities and inflation. This situation could create economic difficulties for many households.

Food collections in Kayanza commune and province

Information received by Ligue Iteka during this week indicates that from 5 to 7 February 2025, CNDD-FDD party has organized awareness-raising sessions in Murima, in Kayanza commune and province. The objective was to mobilize party members, called Gushiririza, around their leader.

During these sessions, the local population was sensitized on the importance of providing the party leader with food, including beans, squash, maize, peas, bananas, goats, chickens, rabbits, etc. The Imbonerakure, the party's youth, were responsible for collecting these foodstuffs from each household, which was mandatory. When the leader visited each hill, local CNDD-FDD members offered him baskets of food, accompanied by drummers, and conducted welcome ceremonies for new members.

III.2. RIGHT TO HEALTH

Resurgence of Mpox and 3 people died at Cibitoke hospital

A resurgence of Mpox epidemic is observed at Cibitoke hospital, where three patients have died in less than two weeks. Concerned residents are asking medical staff to provide them with appropriate treatment and rigorous monitoring. The head of Cibitoke health district reassures the population.

A patient died on Friday, February 14 at Cibitoke hospital. The deaths of two other patients, from monkeypox, date back to early February 2025 in the same hospital. The patients were hospitalized in an isolation center. According to a local source, the health authorities tried to prevent the family of the last deceased from revealing the causes of his death, in order to cover the spread of the disease.

The same source also indicates that the local administration and hospital officials have considered not returning the body to the families, for secret burial. Since the upsurge of the epidemic, almost a year ago, a dozen people have died in this hospital. According to a nurse speaking on condition to remain

anonymous, at least a hundred patients have been treated and are now cured, while around fifteen others are still in intensive care.

According to testimonies, the Red Cross is trying to regularly disinfect the premises in order to limit the risk of contamination. However, the situation seems complex, according to a young doctor met on site. The latter confirms that it is strictly forbidden to disclose any information relating to Mpox. In addition, food aid provided by MSF Belgium is allegedly being diverted, according to caregivers contacted on site who say they are outraged.

This same organization is responsible for paying incentive bonuses to healthcare staff. However, these bonuses are allegedly being diverted, causing anger and discouragement among the medical staff. Faced with this situation, the population fears a resurgence of deaths and a large-scale spread of the disease. Contacted for comment, the head of Cibitoke health district confirmed the presence of cases of Mpox, but denied any diversion, assuring that the bonuses would be paid to the healthcare staff soon.

IV. CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

Ligue Iteka denounces the deterioration of human rights in Burundi and condemns the impunity of the perpetrators of crimes. It launches an urgent appeal to the government of Gitega to :

- ⇒ Establish transparent mechanisms to ensure a regular and stable supply of fuel;
- ⇒ Prevent armed incursions and ensure the security of the population;
- ⇒ Bring the perpetrators of human rights violations to justice.

Ligue Iteka also proposes the following recommendations to ease tensions and prevent a violent escalation in the region to :

- ⇒ Prioritize diplomatic dialogue between Burundi and Rwanda;
- ⇒ Moderate Burundian authority's speeches to avoid any rhetoric that could fuel an open conflict with Rwanda;
- ⇒ Conduct national awareness campaigns on the dangers of war, particularly among young people and local communities.