

BURUNDIAN LIGUE OF HUMAN RIGHTS "ITEKA"

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Weekly bulletin « ITEKA N'IJAMBO » n°462 of the Burundian Ligue of Human Rights "ITEKA"

Week from 17 – 23 February 2025



In memory of Madam Marie Claudette Kwizera, Treasurer of Iteka, reported missing since December 10 2015. From December 2015 to 23 february 2025, Iteka has documented at least 719 cases of enforced disappearances

CONTENTS	PAGES
I. CONTEXT.....	4
I.1. POLITICAL CONTEXT.....	4
I.2. GOVERNANCE CONTEXT.....	5
I.3. ENVIRONMENTAL CONTEXT.....	5
I.4. HUMANITARIAN CONTEXT.....	6
I.5. SECURITY CONTEXT.....	7
I.5.1. PERSONS KILLED BY UNIDENTIFIED PEOPLE.....	11
I.5.2 OTHER SECURITY FACTS.....	12
II. CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS.....	13
II.1. RIGHT TO LIFE.....	13
II.2. RIGHT TO PHYSICAL INTEGRITY.....	13
II.2.1. GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE.....	13
II.2. RIGHT TO LIBERTY.....	14
II.2.1. ARBITRARY ARRESTS.....	14
III. ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS.....	15
III.1 DISRUPTION OF ECONOMIC LIFE.....	15
IV. CATEGORICAL RIGHTS.....	15
IV.1. CHILDREN'S RIGHTS.....	15
V. CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS.....	15

ACRONYMS

CNDD-FDD	: <i>National Council for the Defense of Democracy – Forces for the Defense of Democracy</i>
DRC	: <i>Democratic Republic of Congo</i>
ECOFO	: <i>Fundamental School</i>
FARDC	: <i>Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of Congo.</i>
FDNB	: <i>Burundi National Defense Force.</i>
GBV	: <i>Gender Based Violence</i>
GMIR	: <i>Mobile Rapid Intervention Group</i>
HCR	: <i>High Commission for Refugees</i>
M23	: <i>March 23 Movement</i>
OPJ	: <i>Judicial Police Officer</i>
RED Tabara	: <i>Resistance for the Rule of Law in Burundi</i>
SNR	: <i>National Intelligence Service</i>

0. INTRODUCTION

This bulletin presents an alarming human rights and security situation in Burundi. There were 10 people killed, including 8 found dead and 1 child killed by his own father in Cibitoke. 1 person was injured, 2 victims of GBV including 1 girl and 1 boy were recorded. Sixty cases of arbitrary arrests were observed including 65 Banyamulenge victims arrested in Ruyigi.

Civil and political rights, socio-economic and cultural rights, as well as categorical rights are also taken into account in this bulletin. The worrying humanitarian, environmental and security situation is also reported.

The Imbonerakure and administrators are accused of being the main alleged perpetrators of these human rights violations.

I. CONTEXT

I.1. POLITICAL CONTEXT

Peace plan presented by Burundi for the conflict in the DRC

Faced with a spectacular progress by the M23 in its conquests of territories of the East of the DRC, President Evariste Ndayishimiye proposed a peace plan to avoid a regional war and restore stability in the region. This plan¹ was presented on February 16, 2025 in Addis Ababa by the Burundian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Albert Shingiro, during the 38th Conference of Heads of State and Government of the African Union.

Indeed, announced after the bitter failure of the massive involvement of the invited armies² against the M23, this plan proposes an active involvement of the international community to help the DRC recover its territorial integrity, dismantle all negative forces operating in the East of the country, withdrawal of Rwandan troops, initiation of an inter-Congolese dialogue and a ceasefire.

Evariste Ndayishimiye, Burundian President, considered that the resolution of this conflict requires an inter-Congolese dialogue and declared that if the M23 claims to be Congolese, it only has to take the path of the inter-Congolese peace process under the auspices of the former Kenyan President, Uhuru Kenyatta, designated facilitator of the East African Community. Burundi also called for an immediate and unconditional ceasefire in order to allow an environment conducive to dialogue, to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian aid to civilian populations

and to spare human lives, particularly those of women and children.

It remains to know whether this peace plan reassures all the parties in conflict, especially since the initiating country had involved its troops to support the DRC to fight against the M23. Through its press release, the latter even asked Burundi to withdraw its troops. It should be noted that the warning of the regional flaring in the face of the M23 operations launched by Evariste Ndayishimiye was followed by appeasement statements from Burundi. Burundi indicated that it had spoken to Rwanda's friends and they reassured him that there would be no war. Thus, one could conclude that the advice given to Burundi was fruitful. Burundi decided to disengage from the conflict in the DRC and to call home all Burundian soldiers deployed alongside this country's armed forces. It should be noted that since 2023, more than 10,000 Burundian soldiers had been deployed to support the Congolese army.

Census of non-CNDD-FDD members in Bugendana commune, Gitega province

On 17 February 2025, a group of Imbonerakure conducted a household census on Cishwa hill, Bugendana commune, Gitega province to identify people who were not CNDD-FDD party members.

According to a witness, Fidèle, a mechanic and leader of Imbonerakure on the hill, was forced to participate in the census, but he refused and handed

¹ The Ndayishimiye Plan to pacify the East of the DRC: a peaceful solution to a regional crisis | BA SANGO YA CONGO KINSHASA

² Armies from Tanzania, southern Africa

in his party uniforms. This action is indicative of tensions and divisions within the community.

It should be noted that CNDD-FDD is a Burundian political party that has been involved in several

controversies and accusations of political repression³. This census could be considered as an attempt to control or intimidate political opponents.

1.2. GOVERNANCE CONTEXT

Sixty people returned to Burundi from the DRC

On 20 February 2025, sixty Burundians returning from the DRC, from the localities of Baraka, Mboko Telema, Yungu, Kalamba and Misisi, returned to Burundi through the commercial port of Rumonge, located in the southwest of the country. They ex-

plained that some were in the DRC to work in various sectors, such as agriculture, fishing and the mines of Masisi. All were taken to Rumonge police station to be identified. The administrative authorities specified that after their identification, each would return home. They also mentioned that they

1.3. ENVIRONMENTAL CONTEXT

Devastating heavy rains in Mugina commune, Cibitoke province

Violent storms hit Mugina commune, Cibitoke province, on February 23, 2025, around 4 p.m., leaving behind desolation. Torrential rains accompanied by hail and strong winds hit the hills of Nyempundu and Nyamakarabo, causing considerable both material and human life damage.

According to an eyewitness, four people were injured and many homes were ruined, including seven classrooms completely destroyed, as well as about forty houses that were completely swept away by the bad weather. Entire crops were devastated, wiping out the livelihoods of already vulnerable families.

The inhabitants of Mugina are now facing an emergency situation. They have lost their homes, crops and goods. The communal administrator, Julienne Ndayisaba, launched an urgent appeal to humanitarian organizations and the Ministry of National Soli-

arity to aid the disaster-stricken populations.

The victims are in urgent need of food, medicine and bedding, said Ndayisaba. The solidarity and assistance of all are crucial to alleviate the suffering of these communities severely affected by this natural disaster.

Torrential rains in Gasorwe commune, Muyinga province

As of February 17, 2025, in Gasorwe commune, Muyinga province, nearly 1000 hectares of maize, bean, cassava and other fields located on 9 hills of Gasorwe commune, Muyinga province, were damaged by heavy rains mixed with hail. Dieudonné Niyonizigiye Administrator of this commune and the victim population are asking for the intervention of benefactors. According to this administrator, the most affected hills are Gasuru, Matyazo, Kigoganya, Karimbi, Ngogomo, Kiremba of Kirembaz, Gishuha hill of Bwasare zone and Kiryama hill of Gasorwe zone.

1.4. HUMANITARIAN CONTEXT

Hundreds of men in Congolese police uniforms have taken refuge in Muramvya commune

On Wednesday, February 19, 2025, around 5 p.m., eight Burundian police trucks arrived in Muramvya commune and province, carrying foreign police officers, some of whom were wearing jeans under their police uniforms. They headed straight to Muramvya stadium where they arrived.

According to police sources, these individuals are Congolese police officers who fled the fighting in Uvira against the M23. In all, 587 in police uniform arrived, welcomed by the provincial Governor Euphrem Ndikumasabo, in the presence of provincial police officials. According to these sources, among these refugees, there are Congolese, Rwandans, and even Burundians.

³Burundi "accelerates" the withdrawal of its troops deployed in the east of the DRC

They were installed at Muramvya stadium, under the close surveillance of the police officers from the local police station, supported by GMIR elements from Bujumbura. To date, no intervention by the UNHCR has taken place. The provincial administration distributed bread and juice to them yesterday evening. Muramvya population are scared, with different interpretations of the arrival of these people in Congolese police uniform: according to CNDD-FDD party members, this would be a covert maneuver by the M23 to attack the country. For others, not affiliated with CNDD-FDD party, these would be elements of the FDLR, Interahamwe and Wazalendo seeking to commit reprehensible acts before returning to Kibira. However, only the authorities know the reality and have the duty to enlighten the population. It should be noted that these refugees are located near three schools: Muramvya High School right next to the stadium, ECOFO Muramvya III 100 meters away, and ECOFO Muramvya I 400 meters away. Finally, all these refugees only have access to two toilets, which increases the risk of diseases such as cholera and dysentery.

However, consequences following the accommodation of Congolese police refugees in Muramvya are observed. Since their arrival in Muramvya on February 19, 2025, Congolese refugees, mainly police officers, have started disrupting local security. Crammed into the royal stadium, they suffer from precarious hygiene conditions, with only two toilets for more than 500 people.

The consequences are already visible :

- ⇒ Two cases of dysentery and four cases of malaria have been reported, and the sick are admitted under police surveillance.
- ⇒ The financial department is uncertain about the payment of hospital bills.
- ⇒ The prices of some supplies, such as bread and juice, have increased due to increased demand from refugees, who pay in US dollars.
- ⇒ The local population fears theft and epidemics, and is calling on the authorities to relocate the refugees.

The situation requires urgent attention to avoid

more serious humanitarian and security consequences.

More than three hundred Congolese refugees arrived in Rumonge commune and province

More than three hundred Congolese refugees have arrived in Rumonge commune and province. On 18 February 2025, more than 300 Congolese reached Rumonge. According to witnesses, they gathered on the town's football field. On 19 February 2025, administrative and police authorities, as well as UNHCR, identified 85 of them, including the sick, children and the elderly. The latter were transferred to Mutambara transit center, in Gatete zone, Rumonge commune and province. The others remained in the city. On February 21, 2025, the administrator of Rumonge commune, Augustin Minani, had planned to distribute food aid to these people, but this activity was postponed at the last minute. A debate took place to decide whether the assistance should be provided to the residents of the transit center or to those from the stadium. Failing to compromise, the administrator had to wait for new instructions regarding the aid distribution system. These refugees are from Baraka, in the south of Uvira territory, and have said they fear the progress of the M23 rebels.

A critical humanitarian situation in Buganda and Rugombo communes, Cibitoke province following congolese refugees fleeing conflicts

The province of Cibitoke, Burundi, is facing an unprecedented humanitarian crisis. In less than a week, 32,235 Congolese refugees have flocked to the communes of Buganda and Rugombo, fleeing violence linked to the progress of the AFC/M23 coalition against the Congolese army, the Wazalendo elements supported by the Burundian army.

This massive arrival of the population complicating the region's reception capacities and resources, already weakened by previous conflicts. The refugees, who have settled in precarious areas, particularly at Rugombo stadium where more than 15,000 people are gathered, are living in dramatic conditions.

The lack of infrastructure, food, medicine and shelter exposes the refugees to serious risks. Sanitation conditions are particularly worrying, with a lack of toilets and sanitation facilities that promote the

spread of hygiene-related diseases, such as cholera and dysentery. Although humanitarian organizations such as the Red Cross and UNICEF are working to provide drinking water and other assistance, their efforts remain insufficient given the scale of the needs. The mobile toilets installed on site fill up quickly, and their late emptying worsens the health situation.

Faced with this crisis, national authorities, including the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the National Office for the Protection and Assistance of Refugees and Stateless Persons (ONPRA), launched a refugee census operation on 24 February 2025 to organize their relocation to areas further from the borders of the Demo-

cratic Republic of the Congo, where they will be able to benefit from better living conditions.

However, the implementation of this solution faces many obstacles, such as the lack of resources, the inadequacy of reception infrastructure and the worsening health situation.

This humanitarian crisis highlights the vulnerability of millions of Congolese to the internal conflicts that destabilize their country and their neighbors. The international community must intensify its efforts to support local authorities and humanitarian organizations, in order to alleviate the suffering of these refugees who have no choice but to flee the war.

1.5. SECURITY CONTEXT

Search in Gitega commune and province

On February 21, 2025, in Rango quarter, Gitega commune and province, the population was surrounded by many police officers from the morning. Except students going to school, no one was allowed to leave their homes from 5 a.m. to 8 a.m. According to witnesses, the police officers claimed to be acting on orders to conduct a search in this quarter for Banyamurenge, M23 soldiers and other criminals who had infiltrated Gitega city since the beginning of the week. According to the same witnesses, some residents of this quarters affiliated with CNDD-FDD party were not targeted like others. As of noon, no arrests or seizures of objects had been reported.

Dangerous meetings within CNDD-FDD party

Dangerous meetings took place within CNDD-FDD party after the fall of Goma, a period marked by great losses for the Burundian army. Alarmist propaganda, led by Déo Nsabimana, circulated during these meetings, dealing with several key topics. The M23 and its allies are said to be seeking to establish a Tutsi empire in the region, incorporating Burundi, the DRC and Tanzania by force. It is also claimed that the M23 is mainly recruiting Hutus to send them into combat, which would lead to their decimation.

According to this propaganda, after the conquest of the DRC, Burundi would be the next target of a plan to kill the Hutus. A call for the mobilization of Hu-

tus was launched, inciting them to prepare for combat to preserve their regime and their descendants. Following this call, many Imbonerakure, mostly former combatants, were equipped and deployed. They are estimated between 5 and 7 battalions recently left for the DRC.

Violent fighting is taking place and the army, aided by Imbonerakure, is confronting groups identified as RED-Tabara, which could include Rwandan soldiers. Following an influx of Congolese refugees, Imbonerakure and SNR agents started identifying refugees deemed at risk: Rwandophone refugees, Banyamulenge and men with Tutsi appearance according to their criteria. Several people were jailed on Saturday and Sunday in Rugombo, at Cibitoke Brigade and in Buganda, whose fate remains unknown.

The refugees are grouped in Gihanga while awaiting their care to reduce the risk of executions or disappearances. Human rights defenders and the international community must closely monitor the safety of refugees crossing Rusizi from Rukana (Rugombo) and Nyamitanga (Buganda).

Stampede of Burundian and FARDC soldiers in the face of the progress of the M23 in Cibitoke province

Information received by Ligue Iteka on February 19, 2025 reveals that more than a hundred Burundian and FARDC soldiers deserted the fighting in eastern DRC, fleeing the progress of the M23

rebels. Since February 18, 2025, a large number of Burundian soldiers have returned to Burundi, while FARDC soldiers are being taken care of at the 112th infantry battalion in Cibitoke.

According to our sources, 359 FDNB soldiers and 250 Congolese soldiers have crossed Rusizi border since the night of February 18, 2025, via Rusizi River, between Rukana and Mparambo (Rugombo commune). They are fleeing powerful attacks from the AFC/M23 rebel coalition active in Kamanyola group (Walungu territory). A security source indicates that members of the Burundian army, supporting the FARDC, are abandoning their positions after the fall of Bukavu, joining Cibitoke province via Rusizi. Military trucks are mobilized for their transport from the banks of the river, with main crossing points in Kaburantwa, Rusiga and Rukana, in the communes of Buganda and Rugombo.

An anonymous military source reveals that the Burundian soldiers, poorly equipped and demotivated, are disappointed by the conduct of the FARDC and the Wazarendo, who flee at the least fire from the M23.

The same source reports an increase in desertions among the FDNB and Imbonerakure soldiers deployed in South and North Kivu, risking legal prosecution. In addition, Congolese refugees from Kamanyola, Katogota, Luvungi, Bwegera, Luberuzi, Kigurwe and Sange continue to flow into the communes of Rugombo and Buganda. They are asking the DRC's partners to help bring peace and security to their home country, expressing their fear of crossing Rusizi without security guarantees across the territory.

Mass deployment of Imbonerakure on the borders

From this Wednesday, February 20, 2025, many young people from the presidential party CNDD-FDD are deployed. They meet at the party's offices and at Buganda stadium, where they receive weapons, ammunition and military uniforms. Their mission is to cross the border to fight the M23 rebels in eastern DRC. The families of these young people are very worried and fear they will not see them alive again.

The head of CNDD-FDD party youth league in the new province of Bujumbura has neither confirmed nor denied this information. The young Imbonerakure, from different communes in the provinces of Cibitoke, Bubanza and Bujumbura, are gathered at their party offices and at Buganda stadium. They are receiving instructions on how to behave in the field.

A reward of 200,000 Burundian francs is arranged for each young Imbonerakure, as well as material and financial support for their families. Boots and small and large caliber weapons are distributed on site. Poorly equipped and poorly trained, a local source indicates that these young people from the ruling party cannot fight against the M23, whose fighters know the terrain quite well. The same source reports that concerns are becoming increasingly pressing among these young people, who fear being killed.

Faced with the firepower of the AFC/M23 coalition rebels, some Imbonerakure have reportedly deserted even before their deployment in the DRC. According to a security source, the recent losses suffered by the Burundian army have affected the morale of the Imbonerakure, who are reportedly reluctant to cross the Rusizi border due to the progress of the M23, which now controls Bukavu and Kamanyola cities.

At the same time, there has been a massive return of soldiers of the Burundi National Defense Force (FDNB) and Imbonerakure fleeing the firepower of the M23. Before their engagement, the Imbonerakure were promised financial support for their families, but these promises were not met.

A security source indicates that severe punishments are being considered against Burundian soldiers and Imbonerakure who deserted. Contacted for comment, the head of Imbonerakure in Bujumbura province neither confirmed nor denied the information. However, he acknowledged the massive presence of Imbonerakure in the offices, stating that they are undergoing training on patriotic values and not that they are preparing to go and fight in the DRC.

Parade and paramilitary exercises in Ruyigi commune and province

On February 22, 2025, the commune and province of Ruyigi were the scene of a parade and paramilitary exercises led by young people affiliated with CNDD-FDD political party. These young people, some dressed in party t-shirts and pants similar to the military's exercise uniforms, invaded the streets of the city with songs and slogans that frightened the population.

The messages uttered during this march expressed threats against the Rwandan President Paul Kagame and the M23 rebel group, indicating that any attempt to incur into Burundian territory would be severely repressed. The young Imbonerakure also carried out community work and maintained the surroundings of the Urumuri stadium in Ruyigi. A closed-door meeting was subsequently held at CNDD-FDD party office in Ngarama, led by Fiacre Nkunzimana, communal representative of CNDD-FDD. Only trusted members, called "Imbonerakure z'umutima", were allowed to participate in this meeting, among others Eliudi Ntakarutimana, Innocent Manirakiza, Ferdinand Mpawenayo, Thomas Ntahombaye, Jean Claude Ndayizeye

Parade and paramilitary exercises in Cankuzo commune and province

On February 22, youth affiliated with the ruling party, Imbonerakure, organized a demonstration in party uniform in Minyare zone, Cankuzo commune and province. They began with sports activities at 5 a.m., accompanied by songs that affirmed the dominance of CNDD-FDD and called on opponents to give up.

After the sports, they gathered at Minyare zonal office for a meeting led by Séverin Niragira, head of Imbonerakure youth league. According to the eyewitness, the objective of the meeting was to awaken the spirit of patriotism among the youth during the pre-election period.

The speeches made during the meeting were full of threats towards opponents and potential disruptors of the elections. The Imbonerakure affirmed that they were ready to fight anyone who sought to disrupt the elections or challenge the dominance of

CNDD-FDD

Alert meeting of Imbonerakure of Cankuzo on the political and security situation in eastern DRC

On 18 February 2025, from 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., a meeting was held at Cankuzo communal high school in Cankuzo province to discuss the political and security situation in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The meeting was attended by the communal representatives of Imbonerakure of the new Buhumuza province, as well as the communal representative of CNDD-FDD party in Cankuzo commune, Hilaire Ndayikengurukiye.

The meeting was chaired by Shabani Nimubona, provincial representative of the Youth League in Buhumuza provinces, who urged participants to remain vigilant and ready to defend their homeland if necessary, stressing that the enemy is not far away. This meeting comes in a context of persistent tensions in the region, with clashes between the M23 rebels and the armed forces of the DRC (FARDC). The humanitarian situation in the region is also worrying, with population displacement and increasing needs for humanitarian aid.

Meeting on security at the Burundian-Tanzanian border in Gisagara commune, Cankuzo province

On February 21, 2025, in Gisagara commune, Cankuzo province, a meeting on security at the Burundian-Tanzanian border was held. According to sources on site, the delegation of the Burundian administration was led by the administrator of Gisagara commune, Gratien Nitunga and welcomed a delegation of the administration from Gakonko commune, Kigoma province of the United Republic of Tanzania. The Tanzanian delegation was headed by the administrator of Gakonko commune. Their meeting took place at the Burundian-Tanzanian border of Gasenyi II. Their discussion focused on security on the common border, good cohabitation and exchange of goods between the population of the two countries, the fight against fraud and crime. It should be noted that the Tanzanian administrative authorities were accompanied by the police authorities as well as on the Burundian side.

Census of demobilized CNDD-FDD in Kirundo province

On February 18, 2025, former CNDD-FDD combatants were identified at the party office under the supervision of Abel Ahishakiye. However, those concerned were not satisfied, as only 80 people were present out of the 875 expected from Kirundo province. Despite the postponement of the activity to February 21, 2025, no results were obtained, as even the 80 people initially present did not reappear, except 12 former combatants from Kabanga hill. Some ex-combatants even fled to Tanzania, mentioning the example of three families. Former CNDD-FDD combatants are worried and desperate, feeling abandoned and unsupported despite their involvement in the conflicts.

Census of Imbonerakure in Karuzi province

From 16 February 2025, Imbonerakure censuses have been conducted in all the hills of Karuzi province by local CNDD-FDD party officials. The information collected includes name, age, ethnicity, and education level.

According to witnesses, the purpose of this census is to prepare the Imbonerakure for military training in Gitega, where they will be given weapons for night patrols and track down criminals. CNDD-FDD authorities have reportedly assured that the Imbonerakure will not be sent to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), but rather will be tasked with the country's internal security due to the alleged presence of M23 rebels in the country.

In addition, the Imbonerakure have been informed of the suspension of VOXY car transport between Bujumbura and Kigali, as these vehicles are said to be transporting M23 rebels.

It is important to note that this information are from eyewitnesses and has not been officially confirmed. However, it raises concerns about the security situa-

tion in Burundi and the role of the Imbonerakure in maintaining public order

Paramilitary training in Mabanda commune, Makamba province

Information received by Ligue Iteka on February 17, 2025 indicates that on the morning of February 2, 2025, in Rumonge city, precisely around Rumonge stadium and inside, a crowd of young boys was observed. They were waiting to go to the military training place that would last 3 months, which takes place secretly in Mabanda commune, Makamba province before going to the real activities in the field. Thus, in the afternoon around 3 p.m., at least ten military trucks transported them to the training center.

Security meeting on the Tanzanian-Burundian border held in Gisagara commune, Cankuzo province

On 19 February 2025, a meeting on security at the Tanzanian-Burundi border was held in Bumba, chaired by Boniface Banyizezako, the Governor of the province. He was accompanied by provincial and communal authorities, including police officials, military leaders, and a prosecutor. Police commissioners and communal administrators were also present, as were representatives of the CNDD-FDD party and the Imbonerakure.

The meeting aimed to warn the Imbonerakure and police officers against the theft of cows and the looting of property of Burundians returning from Tanzania. These incidents often involve violence against small traders or refugees. The Governor mentioned that if Burundi is attacked by Kagame, the Imbonerakure and police officers could be corruptible. At the end of the meeting, he asked the authorities to develop strategies to secure the border, involving the identification of Kinyarwanda speakers and investigations leading to arrests.

1.5.1. PERSONS KILLED BY UNIDENTIFIED PEOPLE

A body found in Nyanza-lac commune, Makamba province

On the night of February 18, 2025, in Bukeye quarter of Nyanza-lac commune city, Makamba province, a body of Louis Ndizeye, was found with many injuries after disappearing since the day before. According to witnesses, the suspects including Augustin Nshimirimana and Edmond, both Imbonerakure, alerted the victim's father. Initially, Augustin Nshimirimana, called the victim's father, arguing that his son was beaten up near Rwaba River not far from Nyanza market. Afterwards he informed the same relative that he was killed by the tenants of the plot while he wanted to steal. The two young Imbonerakure allegedly beat the victim before carrying him to this plot to support the theory of a theft. Despite the paradoxes in their statements, they fled after the incident. The police say the investigation is ongoing, while the family demands justice.

A body found in Rugombo commune, Cibitoke province

On February 23, 2025, in the afternoon, a body of a man in his thirties was discovered on Rusiga hill, in Rugombo commune, Cibitoke province. According to a witness, the victim was murdered and then dumped into Nyamagana River. The authorities are asking for the population's collaboration to solve this heinous crime. According to initial information, the man had many head injuries, suggesting a pre-meditated act of violence. His body was recovered from Nyamagana River, where he had been submerged after his death. Gilbert Manirakiza, the communal administrator of Rugombo, confirmed the discovery of the body and ensured its transport to the mortuary of Cibitoke hospital. He appealed the population to collaborate with the authorities, particularly the police, to ensure order and security in the region and identify the perpetrators of this crime. The inhabitants of Rugombo have expressed their concern about this violence, calling on the judicial and police authorities to conduct a rapid and thorough investigation. They demand justice and severe punishment for those responsible for this murder. The local authorities have committed to doing everything possible to clarify the circumstances of this murder, determine the reasons of the

criminals and identify the culprits, while ensuring the safety of the population.

One person killed in Mpanda commune, Bubanza province

On the night of 21 February 2025, Vénuste Nsavyimana, a butcher, was killed by unidentified armed individuals on Nyamabere hill, in Mpanda commune, Bubanza province. According to a witness, the alleged perpetrators, in civilian clothes, called the victim and ordered her to open the door of her house. Once the door was open, they opened fire on Nsavyimana before entering the house. They then allegedly asked his wife for pants that the victim had been wearing the day before.

According to the same witness, the victim allegedly had a loan from an acquaintance, in order to expand his business. The amount of this debt is not known. Vénuste Nsavyimana's body was taken to a private hospital in the region, called "Kwa Hari".

A body found in Nyanza Lac commune, Makamba province

On February 19, 2025, in Bukeye quarter in Nyanza Lac commune city, Makamba province, a body of Louis Ndizeye was found dead in this quarter.

According to local witnesses, the young boy was hit on the head with an iron bar when he tried to steal from a household. According to the same witnesses, the victim's body was buried by the family the same day in Nyanza-lac cemetery.

A body found in Butihinda commune, Muyinga province

On February 19, 2025, in a valley on Butihinda hill, zone and commune, Muyinga province, a body of Emmanuel Ncamurwanko, father of 11 children and a mason, was found. According to witnesses on site, the victim was attacked and strangled by criminals as he was leaving early in the morning for his daily activities. The perpetrators and the causes of this assassination remain unknown. The same witnesses from the locality affirm that Emmanuel Ncamurwanko had no known conflicts with anyone.

A body found in Kayanza commune and province

On February 19, 2025, around 5 a.m., on Mwendo hill, Kayanza commune and province, a body of Georges Nshimirimana, aged 45, a farmer and member of CNDD-FDD party was found lying and strangled on the side of the road from Kayanza city to Mwendo. According to his family, there was no conflict in the family and that the evening before,

1.5.2 OTHER SECURITY FACTS

A person killed in Marangara commune, Ngozi province

On February 21, 2025, on Runda hill, Marangara commune, Ngozi province, André Nkunzimana was killed by his wife Goreth Manirakiza using a chair when the victim was returning home. According to witnesses on the scene, Goreth Manirakiza surrendered to Marangara police in Ngozi province after hitting him on the head with a chair. The victim was rushed to Nyamugari CDS where he died. The neighbors of this family in Nyamugari zone say that there is a climate of mistrust between these two old people. These two members of CNDD-FDD party regularly argued over land disputes because the woman wanted to sell all the properties without her husband's knowledge. The police and the administration are conducting investigations.

Mess in Buhiga commune, Karuzi province

On 16 February 2025, at around 1 p.m., at DPAE Karusi store, in Buhiga commune, Karuzi province, a dispute broke out between the police and the population who were there to collect fertilizer. Eyewitnesses report that chemical fertilizer was being distributed to farmers in Buhinyuza zone, Buhiga commune, while fertilizer from Mutumba commune was being loaded into a Fuso truck. The distributors then announced that the fertilizer was finished for that zone. Angry, the population tried to force their way into the store to check, while another group blocked the road to prevent the truck from leaving. According to witnesses, the provincial commissioner Nirema ordered the police to shoot in the air to calm the situation. In this tumult, Butoyi, a member of CNDD-FDD party, aged about 22 and from Cigati hill, Rutonganikwa zone, Buhiga commune, who was there to collect fertilizer for his boss, was arrested and taken to the provincial police station cell,

the victim was with his friends at the bar of Rwesero center on Mwendo hill. No suspicions on the perpetrators of this incident. The hill head of Mwendo Vital Basabose informed the communal administration and the body was taken to Kayanza hospital. The police said that they investigation started but until now, even his friends who were with the victim in the evening have not been summoned to show that investigation started. The body

where he is jailed. The population claims that the administration does not react after collecting the money, raising concerns about the deposit for the fertilizer. The detainee is still jailed to this day. On the black market, a kilogram of FOMI fertilizer costs 3,500 BIF and a 25 kg bag about 75,000 BIF, causing despair among the population who fear missing this crucial season.

For example, on February 20, 2025, around 9 a.m., at Buhiga market, Buhiga hill, zone and commune, Karuzi province, a trader named Muhabo, a Hutu from CNDD-FDD party, aged between 30 and 35, was arrested and jailed by the police in Buhiga zone cell. His shop was searched following information from the population revealing that he had a stock of chemical fertilizers, while the shortage of this product risks delaying planting for this growing season B. The communal commissioner, named Guillaume, accompanied by the provincial commissioner Nirema, discovered 40 bags of FOMI-IMBURA fertilizer which were taken to Buhiga zone. Bribes are said to be at the origin of this speculation by traders selling prohibited products. For information, a bag normally costs 31,000 Bif, but with this shortage, a bag is sold at 100,000 Bif and a kilogram at 4,000 Bif.

A person injured in Matongo commune, Kayanza province

On February 21, 2025, on Mikamba hill, Matongo commune, Kayanza province, Gordien Ntahiraja, aged 25, injured his father Jean Rwabagira, his brother Pierre Mugisha and his brother's child with a machete. According to the neighbors of this family, there was a land conflict in this family because the father had refused to share the properties with his children, the reason why Gordien wanted to kill his father using the machete. The communal administrator, Alice Nsabiyumva, ordered the hill

authorities to arrest the perpetrator of the incident and take him to the police cell in Matongo. The victims were taken to Musema Hospital for medical treatment.

Thefts from households in Sanzu quarter, in Ruyigi city

On the night of February 17, 2025, in Sanzu quarter, in Ruyigi city, at Cléophas Sahabo's house, household items including kitchen utensils and building materials including rebar were stolen. According to sources on site, on the same night at Violette's house in the same quarter, 3 goats were stolen. According to the same sources, on the night of February 19, 2025, at Célestin Ngendakumana's house, in the same quarter, 1 pig and 5 chickens were stolen. On February 21, 2025, at Léandre Ntakarutimana's house, in Sanzu III quarter, in daytime when everyone was on duty, the door of the house was broken down, a television set and bedding were stolen.

In summary, in less than a week, 4 households were robbed in the same quarter of Sanzu, in Ruyigi city. Small livestock, birds and household objects are mostly targeted.

Following these frequent robberies, some are beginning to believe that they are committed by Imbonerakure who patrol at night and others think that it is a consequence of the mass release of prisoners late last year from the central prison of Ruyigi following the presidential pardon.

The population does not understand how the administration remains silent in the face of this situation and does not take any measures.

Three grenades found in a car, in Ruyigi province city

On February 21, 2025, at Gasanda car park in Ruyigi city, the provincial police commissioner in Ruyigi, Police Colonel Gentil, searched a Probox-type vehicle taxi from Gitega and three grenades were found in this car. According to sources on site, the driver of the taxi and 5 passengers who were in the car were all taken to Ruyigi provincial police station for investigation purposes.

After being questioned the same day, 3 out of 5 passengers who were in the taxi were released while the other 2 and the driver are still being jailed in the provincial police station cell.

II. CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS

II.1. RIGHT TO LIFE

A person killed in Muha commune, Bujumbura province

On February 15, 2025, Egide Niyonizeye, from Gikoto quarter, was hacked to death in Gikoto quarter, Musaga zone, Mugere commune, Bujumbura province as he was returning home. According to witnesses, the perpetrators of this heinous act were Imbonerakure who were patrolling the quarter.

Gikoto residents accuse a group of about fifty Imbonerakure, led by Lionel, of being responsible for Niyonzima's death. This group is known for its night patrols and banditry, including the theft of property.

The population of Gikoto is demanding justice for Egide Niyonizeye and an end to the actions of this Imbonerakure group. The victim's body was transported to the mortuary of Roi Khaled Hospital.

II.2. RIGHT TO PHYSICAL INTEGRITY

II.2.1. GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

A girl raped in Rumonge commune and province

On February 19, 2025, around 10 a.m., on Mutambara hill, Rumonge commune and province, B. N, aged 12, a 2nd year student at ECOFO Mutambara II, was raped by Dynamique Irakaza, a 25-year-old married, a farmer, and a member of CNDD-FDD

party. According to witnesses, the latter took advantage of the break and then took her to an uninhabited house to commit the crime. The child cried for help and passers-by came. He was caught red-handed and is jailed in Rumonge police station cell, while the victim was taken to Humura center in Rumonge for holistic care.

A boy raped in Rumonge commune and province

On February 18, 2015, around 8 p.m., an act of violence was committed on Gatete hill, Rumonge commune and province. I. F, a 13-year-old deaf-mute adolescent was raped by Zabulon Nkurikiye, a 70-

year-old man. According to witnesses, the attack occurred on the shores of Lake Tanganyika. Passers-by rescued the victim, while the alleged attacker was arrested and taken to Rumonge police station. The victim was taken to Humura center for holistic care.

II.2. RIGHT TO LIBERTY

II.2.1. ARBITRARY ARRESTS

More than 65 Congolese Banyamulenge arrested in Ruyigi province

During the week of 17 to 23 February 2025, more than 65 Congolese Banyamulenge were arrested in Ruyigi province and taken to the provincial police station cell. Police officers reinforced checks on the roads leading to Ruyigi due to rumours that Congolese refugees fleeing fighting in eastern DRC were present in the city.

Among those arrested, some came from Kavumu, Bwagiriza and Nyankanda refugee camps, located in Ruyigi and Cankuzo provinces, while others came from Bujumbura city. They are accused of leaving the camps without authorization.

One person arrested in Gitega commune and province

On 20 February 2025, at around 11 a.m., Jean de Dieu Nduwamungu, aged 49, was arrested by the police in a Hilux vehicle without a registration plate at Brasserie Gitega roadblock, on Gitega-Bujumbura national road. According to a neighbour, Jean de Dieu was travelling to Bujumbura to meet a family member at the airport.

The police then came with him to his home for a search, but when they found nothing, they took him away. The next day, his family went to the provincial police station and the Intelligence office to try to find him, but in vain.

It is important to note that Jean de Dieu is from Nyatubuye hill, Mugamba commune, Bururi province, and resided in Rutonde quarter, Gitega commune and province. He was released in 2021 after

serving a 5-year prison sentence in Gitega for being accused of attacking military camps in 2015.

A man arbitrarily detained in Mabanda commune, Makamba province

On February 17, 2025, Drivan Nishimwe, a 21-year-old man, was leaving Mabanda for Makamba province to collect his passport in order to visit his mother in Tanzania. He was arrested and taken to Mabanda police station by a soldier in civilian clothes, incorporated into the army but from the former CNDD-FDD rebellion, whose only knew the face. According to the victim's statements, when he was back, while he was at Mabanda market for shopping, he noticed this soldier who approached him in a hypocritical manner. The latter took him to sit on a trader's terrace, where he began to search his bag, discovering two identity cards in his name. Then, he informed the communal administrator of Mabanda of the arrival of a member of the M23. The latter called quickly young Imbonerakure who reacted as if it were a real attack.

The OPJ asked him if he was Tutsi, and he accepted as it was visible on his face and body. He also answered several other questions about his two identities, justifying that he wanted to obtain a second Lumitel SIM card. Meanwhile, the young Imbonerakure remained around the OPJ's office. Currently, Drivan's family is total distressed, because the high authorities of Makamba province disagree on his release, in particular the Governor, who remains reluctant in the face of SNR and police officials. A rapid intervention by human rights organizations is therefore necessary to save the life of Drivan, who has committed no offense other than being of the Tutsi ethnic group.

III. ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

III.1 DISRUPTION OF ECONOMIC LIFE

Information received by Ligue Iteka on February 20, 2025 indicates that in Ruyigi commune and province, residents are complaining about the lack of chemical fertilizer in stores, while February is the ideal time to sow for the season B.

In Ruyigi province, prices continue to rise. For example, 1 kilogram of beans costs 4,500 BIF and 1 kilogram of rice costs 6,000 BIF. Despite the availability of gasoline and fuel oil at some stations, transport fares are not dropping. The Ruyigi-Gitega fare remains at 20,000 BIF. The administration does not react to this speculation by drivers, who mention the reason as the corruption of traffic police officers. Drivers have to increase the fare or carry extra passengers to pay these agents, known as "Kugura ibarabara". Thus, drivers use various

means to collect the money given to police officers.

On February 21, 2025, at FOMI-BURUNDI office in Cankuzo, residents refused to allow trucks loaded with fertilizer to continue their journey without delivering their purchased fertilizers, even though they had paid in advance. Cankuzo residents had waited several days for the fertilizer and saw trucks leave for other locations without being served. On February 21, in anger, they prevented a loaded truck from leaving. Police officers intervened to disperse the protesters, arresting some. The furious residents expressed their refusal of this situation, saying: *"You will jail us all or kill us all. We refuse these acts while we have paid money."* Until 5:30 p.m., conflicts between the police and residents continued.

IV. CATEGORICAL RIGHTS

IV.1. CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

A child killed by his father in Rugombo commune, Cibitoke province

On the night of February 22, 2025, a family tragedy occurred in Rugombo commune, Cibitoke province. Jean-Paul Hakizimana, a successful gold merchant,

killed his own 15-year-old son, a 7th grade student, by hitting him on the head with an iron bar. According to witnesses, the victim was punished for breaking the windshield of his father's car, although some local sources reject his responsibility for this act.

V. CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

Ligue Iteka denounces the persistent deterioration of human rights in Burundi and condemns the impunity of the perpetrators of crimes. It urgently appeals to the Government of Gitega to:

- ◇ Condemn the alarmist propaganda and hate speech circulating during CNDD-FDD party meetings;
- ◇ Organize a rapid and secure repatriation of Burundian soldiers deployed in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), in coordination with the Congolese authorities and the relevant international organizations;
- ◇ Stop the deployment of young Imbonerakure on the borders and in the DRC, and cancel the recruitment, arming and training of these young people for their participation in combat;
- ◇ Proceed with the disarmament and demobilization of Imbonerakure, by setting up a social and professional reintegration program for these young people;
- ◇ End impunity by bringing to justice and holding accountable those responsible for human rights violations.