

BURUNDIAN LIGUE OF HUMAN RIGHTS "ITEKA"

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Weekly bulletin « ITEKA N'IJAMBO » n°463 of the Burundian Ligue of Human Rights "ITEKA"

Week from 24 February – 2 Mars 2025



In memory of Madam Marie Claudette Kwizera, Treasurer of Iteka, reported missing since December 10 2015. From December 2015 to 2 march 2025, Iteka has documented at least 719 cases of enforced disappearances

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ACRONYMS

ANAGESSA	: <i>National Agency for the Management of Food Security Stock</i>
BUCECO	: <i>Burundi Cement Company</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>
DCE	: <i>Communal Directorate of Education</i>
DRC	: <i>Democratic Republic of Congo</i>
ECOFO	: <i>Fundamental School</i>
FARDC	: <i>Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of Congo</i>
FDLR	: <i>Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda</i>
FDN	: <i>National Defense Forces</i>
HCR	: <i>High Commission for Refugees</i>
M23	: <i>March 23 Movement</i>
OPJ	: <i>Judicial Police Officer</i>
RDF	: <i>Rwandan Defense Forces</i>
UN	: <i>United Nations</i>

0. INTRODUCTION

This bulletin presents an alarming situation of human rights and security in Burundi. 4 people were killed, including 3 found dead and 1 person tortured. 19 cases of arbitrary arrests were observed, including 12 Banyamulenge victims arrested in Ruyigi province.

Civil and political rights, socio-economic and cultural

rights, as well as categorical rights are also considered in this bulletin. The political, governance, economic, humanitarian, security and judicial situation is also reported.

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

1. CONTEXT

1.1. POLITICAL CONTEXT

The missed welcome of Révérien Ndikuriyo, secretary general of CNDD-FDD party in Makamba province

Information received by Ligue Iteka on February 26, 2025 indicates that on February 22, 2025, CNDD-FDD party members gathered on the banks of Mutsindozi River, on the border of Kayogoro and Gitanga communes, in the provinces of Makamba and Rutana, in the new commune of Makamba, to welcome Révérien Ndikuriyo, the secretary general of CNDD-FDD party. Since February 21, 2025, movements of Imbonerakure had been observed from 11 p.m. towards the location of the ceremonies, some chanting party slogans. After a long wait, Ndikuriyo did not come, causing frustration and anger.

A useless wait and growing frustration, many had traveled long distances from Kibago, Makamba and Kayogoro, spending on transport and food, experiencing fatigue, hunger and thirst for more than 24 hours. Two weeks earlier, a similar scenario had occurred at Gisenyi stadium during the match between Aigle Noir team and Messenger Ngozi. These repeated absences raise doubts about his health status, kept secret by the party. Some denounce “lies” and “manipulation”, while the lack of explanations could erode the confidence of members. Time will tell whether the party will choose to provide clarifications or remain silent on the absence of its secretary general. The mystery surrounding Ndikuriyo’s

health and his prolonged silence could affect the stability of CNDD-FDD as crucial political times approach.

Meetings with political overtones in the church in Buhiga commune, Karuzi province

Information received by Ligue Iteka on February 25, 2025 indicates that on February 23, 2025, at the Anglican Church of Buhiga diocese, Buhiga commune, Karuzi province, the communal secretary of CNDD-FDD party of the new Karusi commune, Innocent Niyonkuru accompanied by the members of his bureau members, the DPE Karusi, Ferdinand Havyarimana and his bureau members, the administrators of the former communes: Buhiga, Bugenyuzi, Gitaramuka and Mutumba and the members of their bureau members, the DCE of these four communes, the head of pro CNDD-FDD movements in the new province of Gitega Innocent Ntunzwenimana and his bureau members, the heads of the zones, the representatives of Imbonerakure in the zones and communes have campaigned for elections during a visit to Saint Pierre Cathedral of Buhiga where Bishop Evariste welcomed them during the church service. According to eyewitnesses, the communal secretary spoke and in his speech, he asked the Christians present at the church service to unfailingly vote for CNDD-FDD party and the Bishop insisted on this during his preaching. These CNDD-FDD party officials indicated that they have started visiting other churches and that they will make it a habit.

1.2. GOVERNANCE CONTEXT

Suspension of the export of Brarudi beverages in Rumonge province to the DRC

Since February 23, 2025, the export of Brarudi products to the Democratic Republic of Congo via Lake Tanganyika has been suspended due to intense fighting between the Congolese army and the M23. This decision affects Brarudi company, which exported products such as Amstel, Primus and Amstel Bock to localities along Lake Tanganyika in South Kivu province.

According to sources close to the agents of the Burundian revenue authority and shipping agents at the commercial port of Rumonge, trailer trucks loaded with these Brarudi products regularly go the port of Rumonge to unload and load these beverages into Congolese boats. However, this activity was interrupted due to the security situation in the region.

The suspension of the export of Brarudi products to South Kivu also has humanitarian consequences. Many Congolese and Burundians who had gone to the DRC for work are now fleeing the fighting and flocking to the commercial port of Rumonge. Some have been gathered at Rumonge stadium, where they lack everything and are asking for aid.

According to a UNHCR source, it is difficult to specify the number of Congolese refugees, as it is increasing every day. Some are being sent to transit camps, while others remain at Rumonge stadium.

The suspension of the export of Brarudi products to South Kivu also questions the financial viability of the company. Indeed, exporting its products was a solution to obtain foreign currency while the government could no longer provide it with dollars to purchase raw materials. It remains to be seen how the government will compensate for the loss of income due to this temporarily suspended export.

Plenary session at the National Assembly to review the report of the standing committee on the state of stocks of corn and rice collected in 2024

On February 27, 2025, two Ministers answered questions from members of the National Assembly during a plenary session. The main concerns of the MPs were the state of stocks of corn and rice col-

lected in 2024, the sale of corn by ANAGESSA and the preparation of corn collection for the 2024 C and 2025 A seasons. These issues were raised by the standing committee of MPs in charge of agriculture after a visit to several provinces such as Bubanza, Cibitoke, Kayanza and Ngozi. The Minister of Environment, Agriculture and Livestock, Proposer Dodiko, as well as the Minister of Trade, Transport, Industry and Tourism, Marie Chantal Nijimbere, were present during this session to answer oral questions from MPs on the report of this standing committee.

The MPs expressed their concerns to the two members of the government, particularly regarding the stocks still present in ANAGESSA warehouses while new harvests are being prepared, promising to be more abundant than those of the previous year, as well as the fixing of the price of corn according to the cost of production for the next harvest.

In response, the Minister of Agriculture, Prosper Dodiko, and the Minister of Trade, Marie Chantal Nijimbere, announced that efforts are underway to find outlets. They mentioned that they are in contact with the Ministry of Education to supply school canteens and the Ministry of Interior for distribution to refugees and in prisons. Marie Chantal Nijimbere also specified that discussions are underway with local industries interested in purchasing corn.

Regarding the setting of corn prices for the next harvest, they indicated that they are consulting farmers to set a price corresponding to the cost of production, thus guaranteeing fair remuneration to producers while preserving the competitiveness of the market. These two ministers also highlighted the challenges related to storage and distribution, while mentioning the progress made in the agricultural sector, illustrated by the increase in production.

During these discussions, the MPs addressed the issue of banned plastic packaging that continues to be used. Gélase Ndabirabe, Speaker of the National Assembly, reacted violently by declaring that to discourage the use of sachets, those caught using them should be severely punished, forcing them swallow them. This would cause their stomachs to swell and no one would dare use these plastic bags. Gélase Ndabirabe's remarks shocked the MPs; they are

against democratic principles and human dignity, especially since such punishment is not on the list of penalties established by the country's legislation.

1.3. HUMANITARIAN CONTEXT

Lack of assistance for Congolese refugees at Makombe transit center in Rumonge commune and province

More than 1,200 Congolese refugees arrived at the commercial port of Rumonge since February 16, 2025, are living in difficult conditions at Makombe transit center, in Rumonge commune and province. These refugees, from localities along Lake Tanganyika in South Kivu province, have not received appropriate assistance.

They are sheltered in common rooms, without bedding, cooking, clothing or appropriate hygiene materials for women. Pregnant women and children are particularly vulnerable. The site's health center is not functional, making access to health care difficult.

The refugees receive insufficient food, consisting of 1.89 kg of rice and 700 grams of peas per week per person. Sanitation facilities are also inadequate, with only two blocks of latrines for more than 1,200 people.

The center's capacity was initially 500 places, but it currently shelters more than 1,200 Congolese refugees. Burundians fleeing the fighting in eastern DRC are separated from the Congolese and sent home after identification.

The administrative authorities of Rumonge province are requesting emergency assistance for these Congolese refugees. Governor Léonard Niyonsaba has launched an appeal to partners and benefactors to provide support as food, medicine, tents, bedding and cooking equipment. The provincial committee set up to welcome refugees does not have necessary means to organize an adequate reception system.

Massive arrival of Congolese refugees in Cibitoke province

Information received by Ligue Iteka on February 28, 2025 reveals that in less than two weeks, nearly

50,000 Congolese refugees have flocked to Cibitoke province, fleeing violence in their country. This wave of displaced people, mainly women and children, is challenging the region's reception capacities and calls for urgent international assistance from the UN. The situation is particularly critical in Rugombo commune, which alone has hosted 47,632 refugees, fleeing the clashes between the AFC/M23 coalition and the FARDC in eastern DRC.

During her visit on 26 February 2025, Brigitte Mukanga Eno, UNHCR Representative in Burundi, noted that refugees are being sheltered in precarious conditions: stadiums, schools and churches are transformed into reception centers. The consequences are felt immediately: schools are closed, living conditions are deplorable and the health situation is alarming. More than 2,500 pregnant women, including four victims of sexual violence, and 7,000 children, including three with measles, have been identified among the refugees.

Malaria is spreading and sanitation facilities are largely inadequate, with one toilet for more than 50 people. Faced with this crisis, the Burundian authorities, UNHCR and other international organizations, supported by the South African and Tanzanian embassies, are working to relocate refugees to other provinces, notably Rutana and Mwaro. Despite the solidarity of the inhabitants of Cibitoke, who are providing food and clothing, the needs far exceed the available resources.

UNHCR is launching an urgent appeal for national and international assistance, fearing a rapid deterioration of the situation if the conflicts in the DRC persist. Burundi, already vulnerable, is on the front line facing this massive arrival, which could intensify if the situation in South Kivu does not stabilize.

1.4. ECONOMIC CONTEXT

Price rise of necessities

In Karuzi province, food prices have increased sharply. Local rice has gone from 3,500 Bif to 7,000 Bif per kilogram, and beans from 2,500 Bif to 4,000 Bif. A 1.5-liter bottle of palm oil now costs 15,000 Bif, compared to 8,000 Bif previously. The population is concerned about the future, particularly because of the effects of climate change on the B growing season, as rains are rare. Although chemical fertilizers have been purchased, more than 60% of people have not yet received them.

In Ruyigi province, price rise continue in almost all markets. In Ruyigi market, a kilogram of beans

reaches 4,500 Bif or more during the growing period of crop season B, and a kilogram of rice is at 6,000 Bif, a highest price.

Ruyigi province is also facing a fuel shortage, especially in the city. This situation leads to an increase in the price of transport fare, which affects the prices of necessities on the markets and disrupts some activities of public and private services. Some NGOs, such as SPRAD-Caritas, have suspended their support activities to farmers because of this shortage, particularly harming beneficiaries during crop season B. Other organizations, including CRS, COPED, and IRC, are also affected.

1.5. JUSTICE CONTEXT

Resumption of the CNL party trial at the Supreme Court of Burundi

On February 27, 2025, a quick hearing was held at the Supreme Court of Burundi opposing Agathon Rwasa to the new leadership of CNL party. Since the opposing party was absent, the hearing was quickly postponed to September 25, 2025 due to "incomplete summons". Indeed, six people out of ten defendants have already been summoned. This argument of "incomplete summons" used to justify the postponement of the hearing could be interpreted as an excuse to avoid making a decision quickly.

Let us recall that on March 10, 2024, a congress of CNL party was held in Ngozi province by party refractory members and the said congress decided to eject Agathon Rwasa from the leadership of CNL party and the Minister of Interior ratified this decision on March 18, 2024.

Following this litigation, Rwasa and his followers contested the validity of this decision, arguing that it violated the party's statutes and filed a complaint with the Supreme Court of Burundi. It then opened on November 7, 2024, the trial opposing him to the new leadership of CNL party chaired by Nestor

Girukwishaka and the hearing was postponed to February 27, 2025.

This trial reveals several aspects of judicial irregularities that seem to have the purpose of forever excluding Agathon Rwasa from the next elections, in particular by the use of maneuvers delaying tactics. The hearing held in November 2024 was postponed after the submission of the candidacies. This decision appeared as a first judicial attempt of manipulation, which obviously harmed the validity of the candidacies of CNL party members, in particular, Agathon Rwasa, particularly within the "Burundi Bwa Bose" coalition.

Also, the postponement of the hearing to September 25, 2025 is another intentional delay. A delay of seven months between the February 2025 hearing and the next date in September 2025 represents a particularly long time gap, especially when considering the urgent and essential nature of the decision in a political context approaching the elections. This decision to postpone the hearing so far in time, when six of the ten defendants have already been summoned, questions the real will of the Burundian justice system to resolve this case within a reasonable time.

1.6. SECURITY CONTEXT

Military training in Cibitoke province

Information received by Ligue Iteka on 27 February 2025 reveals that in Cibitoke province, military training sites have been identified in Murambi, near Cishemere refugee camp, as well as in Gasenyi, Musigati and Mudubugu in Bubanza province. The latter, used as a transit camp for soldiers deployed in Somalia and the DRC, has also become a training site. Local sources report the desertion or flight of 200 soldiers to be redeployed to South Kivu, to avoid engagement in the fighting.

Furthermore, military sources indicate that the Rwandan rebels, FDLR, have taken advantage of the arrival of Congolese refugees to resettle in Burundi, particularly in the camps of Cibitoke, Gatumba and Mudubugu, as well as in Musigati and Kabalore, while their strongholds of Mabayi and Bukinyana are the scene of clashes between the FDN and an unidentified group.

According to our sources, the DRC and Burundian general staffs, faced with the absence of sanctions against Rwanda, have simulated violent fighting in areas not controlled by the M23 (massive shootings, looting, sexual violence) in order to: 1. Encourage the Congolese to take refuge in Burundi to alert the international community. 2. Rearm the pro-DRC militias in Burundi. 3. Infiltrate soldiers and Imbonerakure among the refugees returning to the DRC.

Imbonerakure military training and pre-election concerns

The security situation in Cibitoke is rapidly deteriorating. For the past two weeks, youth affiliated with the presidential party, the Imbonerakure, have been conducting intensive military training in the streets of the city, causing great concern among the population.

These youth, supervised by military instructors, are officially intended to reinforce the units deployed in South Kivu. However, the nature and intensity of their activities questions their real objectives, particularly in relation to the upcoming elections and the fight against armed groups.

The population of Cibitoke is living in tension and insecurity, worsened by the paramilitary exercises

of the Imbonerakure. The latter, members of CNDD-FDD party, have intensified their paramilitary training in the six communes of the province. Their presence, marked by patrols in the streets and anti-opposition and anti-Rwanda political slogans, deeply worries the inhabitants.

According to anonymous security sources, these exercises are supervised by instructors from the former FDD rebellion, the FDNB and FDLR, the latter being involved in violence against Tutsis in Rwanda. The training aims to prepare the Imbonerakure to support military units fighting the M23 and RED-Tabara rebel groups in the South Kivu region.

After three days of theoretical training on combat techniques and weapons handling, these young people are sent to the field on the other side of Rusizi River. In addition to this military mission, other sources reveal that the Imbonerakure would be responsible for supervising the upcoming elections, ensuring that citizens vote for the ruling party, by all possible means. Imbonerakure are also reportedly deployed along the border, conducting continuous patrols to monitor the population's movements.

Faced with these allegations, the head of the youth league of the ruling party in the new province of Bujumbura denied any paramilitary activity, stating that the Imbonerakure are only trained on patriotic values at the provincial office of CNDD-FDD. However, the structured and military nature of these training reinforces suspicions about their real intentions.

The situation remains tense in Cibitoke, where the population lives in anxiety, uncertain about the evolution of events.

Paramilitary training of Imbonerakure in Cendajuru commune, Cankuzo province

Information received by Ligue Iteka on February 27, 2025 indicates that in Cendajuru commune, Cankuzo province, concerning the security prevailing in the East of the Democratic Republic of Congo, young Imbonerakure are receiving paramilitary training. According to sources on site, after the training, these young people will be armed. During the

training, they are told that it is to get ready to face an attack in the event that Kagame and the M23 attack Burundi. As for members of the opposition parties, they say that it is rather linked to the upcoming elections to intimidate members of other political parties than the ruling party. This paramilitary training began to be known since early January 2025 when every afternoon the young people affiliated to this party gather at Cendajuru communal stadium for paramilitary exercises.

One person killed in Kayanza commune and province

On February 19, 2025, a family tragedy occurred at Nyabikaranka hill, Gahwenyi sub-hill, in Kayanza

1.6.1. BODIES FOUND

Three bodies found in Buganda commune, Cibitoke province

On 26 February 2025, three unidentified bodies of men wearing masks in an advanced state of decomposition were found by farmers on Kaburantwa hill, Buganda commune, Cibitoke province, near Rusizi River, on the border with the DRC.

According to local sources, they were allegedly executed by armed youths suspected of being Imbonerakure.

Access to the crime scene was immediately prohibited by local authorities. A security source revealed that, on the orders of the administrator of Buganda, Pamphile Hakizimana and the communal police commissioner, the Imbonerakure buried the bodies

1.6.2 OTHER SECURITY FACTS

Fear following rumors in Nyabitsinda and Gisuru communes, Ruyigi province

Information received by Ligue Iteka on 27 February 2025 indicates that fear has gripped residents of Nyabitsinda and Gisuru communes, Ruyigi province, following rumors that the Congolese armed movement M23 is preparing an attack on Burundi. These rumors have caused panic among the population, who fear for their safety.

In Nyabitsinda, fear is palpable, while in Gisuru, opinions are divided. Some residents are planning taking refuge in Tanzania, a country bordering Burundi, in the event of an attack by the M23. Others,

commune and province. Oscar Hatungimana, a 46-year-old farmer, was killed by his own son, Fabrice Nishimwe, aged 15. According to eyewitnesses, the argument broke out when Fabrice accused his father of beating his mother when he came home drunk in the evening. The situation quickly escalated, and Fabrice threw a wooden stick at his father's face, causing his instant death.

Kayanza police immediately arrested Fabrice and jailed him at the police station for judicial investigation purposes. This tragedy highlights the problems of domestic violence and alcoholism that can have catastrophic consequences.

less than 100 meters from Rusizi River.

The favored hypothesis is that these men, probably Burundians fleeing the fighting between the M23 and the FARDC in the DRC, were captured and summarily killed after crossing Rusizi.

This discovery has caused great concern among the inhabitants, already facing a climate of fear. The nighttime presence of armed Imbonerakure around Rusizi River fuels concerns, particularly in the six communes of Cibitoke province.

To date, local and security authorities have not commented on the incident, and the identity of the victims remains unknown. Only rumors are spreading, in the absence of any official communication.

particularly members of the ruling party, say they will resist this armed movement.

It is important to note that these rumors have not been confirmed and that the situation remains tense in the region. Local and national authorities must take measures to reassure the population and prevent any possible violence

An unusual movement of unknown people around Mutukura military camp, in Cankuzo province

A recent report to Ligue Iteka dated February 27, 2025, reports an unusual movement of unknown

people around Mutukura military camp, in Cankuzo province. This presence has scared the local population, who wonder about the mission of these individuals. According to sources on site, these people, numbering 250 to 300 men, have been present for about a month and are used as labor for the camp's agricultural activities.

The inhabitants of the region are particularly worried because of the behavior of these people, who move in groups, seemingly well organized similar to soldiers and it is rare to see an isolated element, indicate the same sources. In addition, when they leave the camp for shopping, they do so in groups, which resembles a military training. This situation has created fear and uncertainty among the local population.

Verification of the possession of the identity card and arrest of two Congolese, in Giharo commune, Rutana province

Information received by Ligue Iteka on February 24, 2025 indicates that as of February 18, 2025, on Butezi and Kabingo hills, located in Butezi zone, Giharo commune, from RN 11 to Mazimeru River, no one can pass without an identity card or without being known in the locality. According to local sources, this measure aims to control the movements of people in and out of the commune, to verify the residence status and to determine whether the individuals are Burundians or not. This is how two Congolese, trying to return to their site built on Butegeri sub-hill at Musenyi hill, in Giharo zone and commune, were arrested.

These individuals were taken to Giharo communal police cell, in Rubaho, and their names remain to be identified. The representative of this verification operation is OPJ Déo, on duty at Giharo communal police station. According to external sources, the objective is to prohibit the entry of Congolese into Burundi to prevent the infiltration of criminals.

Search at the refugee site in Giharo commune, Rutana province

On February 25, 2025, in the morning, around 8 a.m., at the refugee site located on Butegeri sub-hill, Musenyi hill, Giharo zone and commune, Rutana province, a search was carried out by the provincial commissioner. According to sources on site, 3 Congolese were arrested and 11 Kalashnikov-type rifles were found. It should be noted that in Giharo commune, each person must have an identity card, there are new faces of police officers such that no one can pass without showing their identity card. Congolese are experiencing repetitive arrests following insecurity that is in the DRC, causing movements of these Congolese people to come and go to Burundi as a country of refuge. No one has the right to ask why these Congolese people are arrested. According to the same sources, these 3 Congolese were taken to the provincial police station cell.

Demonstration of force by the Imbonerakure in Kirundo commune and province

On March 1, 2025, in Kirundo downtown, in Kirundo commune and province, Tite Habimana, leader of Imbonerakure of Butanyerera, and Abel Ahishakiye, leader of Imbonerakure of Kirundo, organized a demonstration march by Imbonerakure entitled "Demonstration of force", whose songs targeted Rwanda and its president.

According to eyewitnesses, they demanded authorization from President Ndayishimiye to attack Rwanda to repatriate the putschist Niyombare and destabilize Kagame in one day, while looking for the enemy everywhere. According to the same witnesses, this march ended at Kabande car park, on Kavogero hill, but the number of participants was low. Tite urged the Imbonerakure to remember the year 2015 to intensify their efforts to monitor the movements of opponents.

II. CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS

II.1. RIGHT TO PHYSICAL INTEGRITY

II.1.1. TORTURE

A member of CNL party tortured in Mbuye commune, Muramvya province

On February 25, 2025, at around 7 p.m., on Kabuye hill, Gasura zone, Mbuye commune, Muramvya province, Séverin Niyondiko, 26, a bike taxi driver and member of CNL party, was tortured by the police in this zone. While he was returning home to Kirehe hill with his friend Vincent Kangoye, 28, a farmer, he met a group of 6 police officers on patrol

who stopped them. According to sources on site, these police officers blindfolded Séverin and roped him. His friend Vincent fled when he saw that they started to beat him with rifle butts. The police officers robbed all the victim's money and took his bicycle. According to the same sources, passers-by untied the victim around 9 p.m., and the victim was able to recognize one of the police officers but refused to denounce him despite the advice of his friends, for fear of being killed.

II.2. RIGHT TO FREEDOM

II.2.1. ARBITRARY ARRESTS

Three people arrested in Ntahangwa commune, Bujumbura mairie

Three people were arrested by SNR agents in Bujumbura mairie, on different dates and from different locations. Lieutenant Kevin Nishimwe was arrested on 13 February 2025, followed by Second Lieutenant Albert Ndayisaba on 24 February 2025. Finally, Manassé Nizigiyimana, a civilian, was arrested at his home in Carama quarter, Kinama zone, Ntahangwa commune, Bujumbura mairie, on 2 March 2025.

They were arrested to allow him a short time to bring it but in vain. Instead of giving him this time, he was forced to sit down. The victim told them that he is even their neighbor. The police officers beat him, telling him that even if they fell sick, they would defend themselves, without resorting to outside help. Didace forcibly agreed to sit down and called his wife to bring him his national identity card. Upon arrival, the lady was informed that her husband is a deviant of peace. After the verification of this card, Kantabaze was released.

The two officers were arrested at their respective places of work: Muha camp for the first and the general staff office for the second. They are accused of having exchanged messages via WhatsApp relating to the clashes in the DRC.

According to sources on site, one of their phones was compromised during an electrical recharge, allowing the interception of these communications. The three men are currently jailed at the SNR office.

Twelve people arrested in Ruyigi commune and province

Information received by Ligue Iteka on February 27, 2025 indicates that in addition to 65 people arrested the week from February 17 to 23, 2025, by the police accusing them of lack of documents, during this week from February 24 to March 2, 2025, twelve other people were arrested under the same conditions.

A person arrested by police officers in Giharo commune, Rutana province

On February 27, 2025, around 4 p.m., on Butezi hill and zone, Giharo commune, Rutana province, Didace Kantabaze, a teacher at Butezi Communal High School, residing on the said hill, was arrested by police officers including Ezéchiel. According to sources on site, these police officers asked him for his identity card and this teacher told them that his card was at home. The latter asked the police offi-

All these people were arrested at the roadblocks entering and leaving Ruyigi city and are all of these people are from "Banyamulenge" community from the Congolese refugee camps of Bwagiriza, Nyan-kanda, Kavumu and Bujumbura city.

These people are of three categories according to their charge. The first category of people are accused of having left the camps without authorization, the second category are Banyamulenge from Bujumbura city but who do not have papers and the third

category of people are Banyamulenge who were arrested in possession of Burundian national identity cards and election registration receipts.

According to our sources at Ruyigi Public Prosecutor's Office, this third category of people composed of 4 Banyamulenge are already jailed at Ruyigi central prison. For the rest, investigations continue. These vague arrests are said to be linked to the security situation in the East of the DRC.

A girl arrested in Nyabitsinda commune, Ruyigi province

On the night of February 24, 2025, in Nyabitsinda, Ruyigi province, a young girl named Honnête Niyonyishu was arrested by Imbonerakure. According to local sources, she is suspected of being a spy for the M23 movement, as she was not known in this locality. She was taken directly to the cell of Nyabitsinda commune. On February 25, 2025, she was questioned by OPJ Jean Claude Nibizi. In response to the question on her origins, she said she was from Bwagiriza, in Butezi commune.

However, investigations carried out by the administrative authorities indicate that she could be from Karuzi. Another suspicion is that, although she claimed to have studied in the United Republic of Tanzania, she mainly speaks French in her conversations, while English and Kiswahili are the languages of instruction in Tanzania. Given the inconsistencies in her answers regarding her identity and origins, the OPJ created a file, and the alleged person was transferred to Ruyigi provincial police station on February 28, 2025 for further investigations.

Two people arrested in Buhiga commune, Karuzi province

On February 24, 2025, two young boys including Célestin Nimpagaritse alias Tintin, aged 32, and Kagimbi Grégoire, aged 23, all from Buhiga hill, zone and commune, Karuzi province, were arrested when they were returning from Bujumbura. Célestin is a taxi driver and Grégoire is currently

unemployed. According to eyewitnesses, they conversed, one speaking Kinyarwanda and Célestin answered her in Ugandan and the Imbonerakure called the police who arrested them and took them to the provincial police station cell of Gitega where they spent a night before being released. Célestin asked them to contact Innocent Ntunzwenimana, the leader of CNDD-FDD party movements in Gitega province. He told the police that they know them, which is the reason for their release.

Roundups of foreigners followed by ransoming at Bujumbura mairie

Information communicated to Ligue Iteka on February 27, 2024 reveals that, for several days, the Burundian police have been carrying out control operations targeting foreigners, particularly Congolese nationals and Banyamulenge. The authorities justify these operations by internal security reasons, in response to the insecurity prevailing in eastern DRC. Testimonies report cases of ransoming, where police officers and Imbonerakure demand payments in exchange for non-arrest or non-expulsion.

Foreigners, especially from the Great Lakes region, are arrested and threatened with imprisonment or expulsion, before being offered a financial arrangement. A witness in Kinanira II reported that a ransom of approximately 500,000 BIF was allegedly paid to Imbonerakure in complicity with police officers.

During an operation in Gakungwe, Kabezi commune, a witness stated that no arrested foreigner had been transferred to a place of detention or interrogation, specifying that cases are settled on the spot: "When we arrest foreigners, their files are processed immediately, they receive money and everything is closed." Tensions were also observed in Kinanira II, where Imbonerakure accused police officers of having accepted money to release an individual coming from Uganda via Tanzania. These practices arouse indignation and harm Burundi's image.

III. ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

III.1. RIGHT TO EDUCATION

Students doing field work for a CNDD-FDD party member in Giharo commune, Rutana province

On 27 February 2025, a worrying situation was reported to Ligue Iteka in Giharo commune, Rutana province. About 300 students from ECOFO Muzye I, from grades 7 to 9, were forced to de-seed corn for Sylvain Nzikoruriho, provincial leader of CNDD-FDD party in Burunga province.

According to sources on site, the students attend classes in the morning, but are forced to spend the afternoon de-seeding corn stored on the school stores, instead of studying. The parents of these students are concerned about this situation and are asking the education authorities to prioritize the children's interests and allow them to focus on their studies.

This situation raises concerns about the respect of children's rights and the negative impact it may have on their education and well-being. Parents and education authorities must work together to find a solution that prioritizes the children's education and

well-being.

Paramilitary training in schools in Rumonge province

On 26 February 2025, approximately 200 students from Rukinga I, Rukinga II and Rukinga III primary schools were forced to participate in paramilitary training organized by CNDD-FDD party. This training was led by their teachers, who are members of this party. According to witnesses, the activities were supervised by Jérôme Nzohabonayo, director of Rukinga II primary school, also a member CNDD-FDD and head of Imbonerakure youth league in Rumonge province.

This is the second such training organized in less than a month for these same students by school officials. The activities of this training were divided into two teams. A team of about a hundred students was in a room at Rumonge high school, near the school's football field. The paramilitary parade was done to the military music. On January 30, 2025, another training was organized for the same students in similar conditions and at the same location.

III.2. RIGHT TO FAIR PAYMENT

Unpaid bonuses and irregularities in Mugina commune, Cibitoke province

Since January 6, 2025, many volunteer teachers are still waiting for the payment of their incentive bonuses, even though they are financed by contributions from parents of primary and secondary school students. This delay is causing great concern and suspicion.

The person responsible for this situation is David Nikiza, the communal director of education, and his three advisors are accused of corruption and embezzlement. The opaque management of parents' contributions is fueling heated controversy.

Volunteer teachers express several grievances:

1. Management of bonuses: They had requested that the bonuses be managed directly by the schools, a request rejected by the communal direction. This refusal raises questions among teachers,

principals and parents.

2. Irregular recruitment: The recruitment of volunteers for the current school year is marred by numerous irregularities:

a) **Corruption and favoritism:** Teachers with a low number of teaching hours or assigned to unnecessary positions have been recruited. Some volunteers are employed in administrative tasks without real activity.

b) **Unequal treatment:**

- Bonuses are distributed inequitably, favoring schools with higher incomes and a low number of volunteers.

- Teachers with higher degrees (bachelor's degrees) receive the same bonuses as those with lower qualifications (D6 or D7), despite different workloads and responsibilities.

- Bonuses do not take into account the hourly workload, which creates injustice between teachers with a very variable number of teaching hours.

These irregularities partly explain the delay in payment of bonuses. The opaque management of the communal administration risks seriously disrupting school activities, as the funds collected from parents

could finish before the end of the school year.

In addition to the threat of teachers' strikes, students and their parents are also victims of this mismanagement. Parents and teachers are calling for the intervention of the communal administration to resolve this situation and ensure transparent management of funds.

IV. CATEGORICAL RIGHTS

IV.1. WOMEN'S RIGHTS

Expulsion of women in Mabayi commune, Cibitoke province

From 17 to 21 February 2025, the communal authorities ordered the expulsion of women not from the region, carrying out survival activities such as waitresses in bars, money transfer operators, telephone credit sellers or restaurant owners.

This campaign, beyond its discriminatory nature, raises suspicions of ethnic motivations. According to a source within the Imbonerakure, most of waitresses are Tutsi. To hide this, all waitresses are targeted, including those whose affiliation with CNDD-FDD is not confirmed.

This decision, justified by the communal administra-

tion as a measure to combat the persistent insecurity in Kibira forest and its surroundings, is strongly questionable. It follows the arrest, during the week of 10 to 14 February 2025, of a barmaid accused of supplying the FDLR rebels during clashes in Kibira. According to our sources, the intelligence services forced her to testify that she also supplied drinks to the RDF.

This measure is perceived as discriminatory, specifically targeting women from other regions.

In addition, this decision now prohibits single women foreign to Mabayi from renting accommodation or carrying out a commercial activity there, thus reinforcing the discriminatory nature of the decision.

V. CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

Ligue Iteka strongly regrets the persistent deterioration of human rights in Burundi and the impunity of the perpetrators of crimes. Faced with this alarming situation, Ligue Iteka is launching an urgent appeal to the Burundian authorities and the international community.

To the Government of Gitega:

1. Strengthen humanitarian assistance and infrastructure for refugees, particularly in terms of food, health and logistical assistance.
2. Promote national and regional political stability and strengthen internal security to prevent conflict and protect civilians.
3. Ensure the protection of human rights and fight against impunity by investigating crimes committed and bringing perpetrators to justice.

To international organizations:

1. Provide financial and logistical assistance to the Burundian Government to help it manage the humanitarian crisis and strengthen infrastructure exacerbated by Congolese refugees.
2. Support the efforts of the international community to promote peace, stability and human rights in Burundi.

Ligue Iteka urges the international community to take urgent measures to respond to the humanitarian crisis in Burundi and to promote the protection of human rights. It is essential to work together to find lasting solutions to the current crisis and to ensure a more stable and just future for the Burundian people.