

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

*Approved by Ministerial Order n ° 530/0273 of 10 November 1994 revising Order No. 550 /029 of 6 February 1991*



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*Weekly bulletin « ITEKA N'IJAMBO » n°471 of the Burundian Ligue of Human Rights "ITEKA"*

**Week from 21-27 April 2025**



*In memory of Madame Marie Claudette Kwizera, Treasurer of Iteka, reported missing since December 10 2015. From December 2015 to 27 April 2025, Iteka has documented at least 727 cases of enforced disappearances*

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## **ACRONYMS**

|                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| <b>BSR</b>      | : <i>Special Research Office</i>  |
| <b>CDS</b>      | : <i>Health Center</i>  |
| <b>CECI</b>     | : <i>Independent Municipal Electoral Commission</i>                                       |
| <b>CENI</b>     | : <i>Independent National Electoral Commission</i>  |
| <b>CNDD FDD</b> | : <i>National Council for the Defense of Democracy-Force for the Defense of Democracy</i> |
| <b>CNL</b>      | : <i>National Congress for Liberation</i>   |
| <b>COOPEC</b>   | : <i>Savings and Credit Cooperative</i>   |
| <b>COOPEDI</b>  | : <i>Ineza Iwacu Development Cooperative</i>  |
| <b>DCE</b>      | : <i>Municipal Director of Education</i>  |
| <b>DG</b>       | : <i>General Director</i>   |
| <b>DRC</b>      | : <i>Democratic Republic of Congo</i>   |
| <b>ECOFO</b>    | : <i>Basic School</i>   |
| <b>FARDC</b>    | : <i>Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of Congo</i>                                 |
| <b>FDD</b>      | : <i>Forces for the Defense of Democracy</i>  |
| <b>FRODEBU</b>  | : <i>Front for Democracy in Burundi</i>   |
| <b>ISABU</b>    | : <i>Burundi Institute of Agricultural Sciences</i>                                       |
| <b>OPJ</b>      | : <i>Judicial Police Officer</i>  |
| <b>UPRONA</b>   | : <i>Union for National Progress</i>  |

## 0. INTRODUCTION

This bulletin presents a worrying human rights and security situation in Burundi as we approach the legislative and communal elections scheduled for June 5, 2025. This bulletin is presented in a political context marred by significant irregularities.

Thirteen people died, including six found dead. Among the dead are a woman, two girls, and a teenager of approximately 15 years old.

In addition, one person was abducted, two people were tortured, including a child burned by her mother,

one victim of GBV, and two people were arbitrarily arrested.

Civil and political rights, socioeconomic, and cultural rights are also covered in this bulletin. The political, security, and governance context is also reported.

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

## 1. CONTEXT

### 1.1. POLITICAL CONTEXT

#### **The establishment and training of polling station members marred by irregularities**

The week of April 21-27, 2025, was marked across the country by the establishment and training of polling station members in preparation for the elections scheduled for June in Burundi. This activity was characterized by lamentations for those who are not members of CNDD-FDD, after seeing those who were selected for this operation.

**In Bugendana, Gishubi, and Gitega communes,** the polling station presidents are all from CNDD-FDD party. Even the few members proposed by UPRONA party who are on the lists are occupying the positions of ordinary polling station members. Nicayenzi Jean Berchimas, communal representative of FRODEBU party, says he sees no point in discussing elections when all voting operations will be carried out solely by CNDD-FDD members. Nkurunziza Balthazar, a member of CECI in Gishubi commune, said aloud: "*Ayo ma enveloppes muzana nayo muriko mupfisha ubusa.*" The lists were made by the hill heads of CNDD-FDD party. It should be noted that the 11 communes that made up Gitega province were merged into only three communes, in accordance with the new administrative division of provinces and communes.

**In Bugendana commune,** the activity, which should have been inclusive and transparent, caused many complaints from the members who were not

selected. The observation is that all those selected are members of the CNDD-FDD. It was even noted that almost all the commune and zone staff are among the top candidates. Those who are not CNDD-FDD members are questioning the independence of polling station staff during the upcoming elections. A complete lack of a transparent selection process is evident, as none of the envelopes containing submitted application files were opened, according to some CNDD-FDD teachers who were not fortunate enough to be selected. They add that the lists of members to be trained were directly drawn up by CNDD-FDD zone representatives, five days before the application period started. This closed-minded approach led to frustration, even within the ruling party, as several CNDD-FDD members, who had hoped to be selected, attempted to disrupt the training, saying they did not understand how those who had not even submitted their applications were on the lists.

**In Muramvya commune,** training for polling station members took place on April 23 and 24, 2025, in the multipurpose room of Muramvya High School. According to the 1<sup>st</sup> Communal Secretary of UPRONA party in Muramvya, Setabaruka Jean Pierre, his party had submitted 98 candidates to the CECI, but no one was selected, nor were any of the other parties. According to this same political leader, the provisions of Article 40 of the Electoral Code stipulate "*the recruitment of polling station*

*members must respect, as much as possible, political, ethnic, and gender diversity."* Other parties already see this as the beginnings of electoral fraud.

**In Bujumbura province**, in Gomvyi, Mugere commune, the training session took place in the hall of the former Kabezi commune, and the composition of the polling station members sparked strong indignation among the population and local political actors.

Points of contention were raised, including complaints about:

- ◇ **Predominance of civil servants:** The population questions the majority of State civil servants among polling station staff, given that many unemployed people reside in the area.
- ◇ **Controversial presiding officers:** The personalities of some polling station presiding officers are considered inadequate by residents.
- ◇ **Suspicious of bias:** Political actors believe that these figures were chosen to facilitate electoral fraud.
- ◇ **Political affiliation:** All polling station staff are affiliated with CNDD-FDD, raising concerns about the fairness of the upcoming elections.

Faced with these factors, the local population expresses deep unease about the conduct of the upcoming elections.

**As for Rutana province**, the week of April 21-27, 2025, was also marked by the recruitment and training of polling station officers in all the communes of Rutana province.

According to local sources, across all the communes, almost all polling station presidents are ECOFO directors, and the members are almost all from CNDD-FDD party.

Same echo from Cankuzo and Ruyigi provinces. All polling station presidents are members of CNDD-FDD party. Members of opposition parties in these provinces say it's useless to vote given the origins of these polling station officers.

## **Forced meetings and contributions to finance a day of show of force of CNDD-FDD**

**In Gitanga commune, Rutana province**, the CNDD-FDD party zone leader met with teachers affiliated with the presidential party in Kinzanza zone on April 23, 2025, to properly prepare for the elections and show the ruling party's force at the provincial level.

On April 22, 2025, the same ruling party leader in this zone met with Bagumyabanga of Nyagisambwe hill to properly prepare for the 2025 elections. On April 24, 2025, it was the turn of CNDD-FDD party's communal secretary to meet with the Bagumyabanga of Gitanga commune, again with the purpose of properly preparing for the elections.

**In Cankuzo province**, from April 14 to April 26, 2025, CNDD-FDD party members continued to collect compulsory contributions for CNDD-FDD show of force scheduled for April 26, 2025, in Cankuzo commune. According to local sources, this period was marked by the collection of funds and food from all households, in all public and private services, from individuals without exception, to support and finance the day of show of force by Imbonerakure, Bakenyerarugamba, and Bagumyabanga, planned in Cankuzo from different parts of the country.

According to the same sources, for provincial public services, Marciane Citeretse, a CNDD-FDD party member and also the provincial civil registry inspector, had a list in hand on the morning of April 23, 2025, which she circulated to all State services to collect funds. Contributors wrote their names, department, amount contributed, phone number, and signature. Most people contributed for fearing consequences reserved for so-called recalcitrants.

At the same time, other Imbonerakure and Bakenyerarugamba visited different households to collect food, including beans, rice, corn, and more. Each department, school, street, quarter, hill, CDS, hospital, and so on, had a person responsible for this systematic collection.

**In Kirundo province**, on April 22, 2025, at Bushaza Stadium, Nyange Bushaza hill, Kirundo commune and province, a meeting of motorcyclists



from the province was organized by their representatives, who stated that the objective was to share with them the decision made from CNDD FDD provincial office. According to witnesses present at the meeting, each motorcyclist must pay 50,000 Fbu as contributions for the electoral campaign period. All the motorcyclists preferred to remain silent, lamenting this decision. They say that their households had contributed to the election fee collections carried out household by household.

### **CNDD-FDD activities disrupt other usual activities**

During this same week, since April 14, 2025, various activities have been organized by CNDD-FDD to prepare for this Saturday, April 26, 2025 show of force. These activities include Imbonerakure's team sports, which have been used to terrorize others by paralyzing their activities, and forcing the closure of private services, including bicycle and motorcycle transportation, restaurants, hairdressing salons, and multiservice kiosks, as well as preparatory meetings and community service activities in the hills. Shockingly, the Imbonerakure were beating those who did not show up for these activities.

**In Karuzi province**, on April 22, 2025, at 2:00 p.m., CNDD-FDD party members held meetings at the quarters and sub-hill levels in all the hills and quarters of the province. In our constituency, communicators began circulating the hills and quarters at 8 a.m., announcing these meetings using loudspeakers. From 1 p.m., they started forcibly closing stores, shops, and restaurants in small towns and in the hills. Witnesses in the fields said that the Imbonerakure were snatching their hoes and other work tools.

According to those who attended these meetings, they had a national message inviting them to go very early in the morning to collect their voter's cards when they will be available, urging them not to be late or to wait until the second day. They added that the true Bagumyabanga only collect them on the first day, but the distribution date remains unknown. The meeting was held by CNDD-FDD officials from other hills or quarters, different from their own.

**In Makamba province, specifically in Kayogoro commune**, on April 25, 2025, young people affiliated with CNDD-FDD party roamed the streets of Kayogoro center with sticks made to resemble guns. According to them, they were preparing for the festivities aimed at demonstrating power at the provincial level.

### **Forced Contribution to the CNDD-FDD Campaign in Kirundo province**

On April 22, 2025, at Bushaza Stadium, Nyange Bushaza hill, Kirundo commune and province, a meeting of motorcyclists from across the province was organized by their representatives, who stated that the objective was to share with them the decision made from the provincial CNDD-FDD office. According to witnesses present at the meeting, each motorcyclist must pay 50,000 Bif as contributions for the electoral campaign periods. All the motorcyclists preferred to remain silent, lamenting this decision. They say that their households had contributed to the election fee collections carried out household by household.

### **CNDD-FDD party show of power in Cankuzo province**

On April 26, 2025, in Cankuzo commune, which includes the former communes of Cankuzo and Kigamba, Cankuzo province, the CNDD-FDD party held a show of power. According to local sources, the entire week of April 21-27, 2025, in Cankuzo commune, was marked by preparations for the day: preparations for parades by youth affiliated with the party, preparations for dances by youth groups, training for soccer teams made up of youth members of the party, and the collection of money and food to be used on the day.

According to the same sources, for the food collection, each household was required to contribute either 3,000 BIF or 3 kilograms of corn for the preparation of beer to be used on the occasion. For civil servants affiliated with this party, the contribution was 5,000 Bif.

Food collection was systematic for members and non-members alike, which shocked the population, who wondered how anyone could be forced to contribute to a political party, which they were not

not members of. The young people affiliated with this party who were conducting the collection told the population that anyone who did not contribute would be noted somewhere and would not be entitled to any civil status documents because they would be considered an enemy of the country.

The same sources added that the activities marking the day started at 5:00 a.m., when all the residents of Cankuzo town were awakened by the noise from CNDD-FDD party youth who were touring the town's quarters playing sports. The songs of these young people had a special character that day because they did not include insults directed at members of other political parties, as usual.

All the youth members of this party, from all the hills of the new commune of Cankuzo, gathered at a place commonly known as a roundabout on the road to Ruyigi and headed to Musinga road, passing near Mutukura military camp.

After the sports session, they lined up for the show of force parade. Shortly before the parade, there was a closed meeting of CNDD-FDD party officials appointed by decree to the provincial office of this party. According to a party member who requested anonymity, the purpose of this meeting was to demand a contribution from them for the upcoming elections, where a MP will have to pay 500,000 Bif, and those appointed by decree 300,000 Bif.

The parade started in front of Cankuzo parish. It ended at BUHUMUZA stadium, where two football matches were held. The first football match kicked off at 2:00 p.m. It was the girls' football match between Musinga and Cankuzo girls' teams. The match ended 3 goals to zero in favor of Musinga girls' team.

At 2:45 p.m., it was the turn of boys' football match between Gisagara commune team and Ruyigi commune team. Gisagara team won 2 penalties to Ruyigi team zero.

According to the same sources, in his speech, Gérard Barutwanayo urged the Bagumyabanga to remain calm like football players when defending their own team during the match, which left the participants of this gathering rethinking what he meant. It will be necessary to respond massively to the highpoint of June 5, 2025, the day of the elections

and vote for CNDD-FDD party, continued this authority.

As for Shabani Nimobona, the provincial representative of the Youth League in Buhumuza province, who was present, he said that every young person is an "Imbonerakure," meaning they are ahead of others, that is, in the country's development, for security, etc. Therefore, on election day, you will have to wake up very early to ensure security, he said. At each polling station, there must be at least two or three young people to ensure security so as not to give way to opponents "abakeba". These opponents he was referring to are civil society observers, national and international observers.

Some people wonder how the young Imbonerakure will replace security forces, which are in sufficient numbers and paid by the State. Some describe this as an act of intimidation on election day and which could jeopardize the results of these elections.

### **CNDD-FDD meetings to prepare for the upcoming elections in the provinces of Cankuzo, Rutana, and Makamba.**

**In Cankuzo province**, on April 24, 2025, in Cendajuru commune city, Cankuzo province, a meeting of Imbonerakure youth from all the hills of the commune was held. It was chaired by Nestor Irambona, nicknamed "Volontaire," in the communal meeting room. According to Nestor Irambona, the objective of this meeting was to raise awareness among young people that any young person who is a true Imbonerakure is called upon to ensure security on the election day. Two or three young Imbonerakure will be at the entrance to each polling station to monitor all our CNDD-FDD party members who will be present at the elections, because there are those who have their own political affiliation, he added. "They may appear to be with us, even though they are mercenaries, the reason why we must monitor them closely."

According to local sources, members of other political parties in this locality, especially those in the opposition, describe these acts as acts of terrorism against their members. They therefore issue a strong appeal to civil society and the international community to closely monitor the preparations for the upcoming elections following the conduct of these young Imbonerakure. They call on the CENI

demonstrate its impartiality and neutrality in preparing for these elections.

**In Rutana province, in Bukemba commune,** on April 25, 2025, CNDD-FDD party held a meeting with election preparations on the agenda.

According to local sources, other political parties are absent from the field; there are only a few offices or insignia of a few political parties such as FRODEBU, UPRONA, and CNL. These parties do not conduct any notable activities, not even a simple meeting of any executive body.

**In Giharo commune, in the same Rutana province,** only the ruling party held meetings whose agenda were peace and security and election preparations. Thus, on April 22, 2025, a ruling party meeting was held on Mwebeya and Kabingo hills in Butezi zone, and on April 23, 2025, on Butezi, Rubanga, and Nkanka hills in Butezi zone; and on April 25, 2025, on Muzye hill in Muzye zone; on Gakungu hill in Gakungu zone; and on Nkanka hill in Butezi zone. On April 26, 2025, the meetings were held on Giharo, Mura, Bukeno, Bayaga, Nkudye and Kanyererwe hills in Giharo zone and the items on the agenda were the same, namely peace, security and preparation for elections.

**In Musongati commune,** CNDD-FDD party meeting was held on April 22, 2025, in Shanga hill and zone. The agenda included preparations for the elections and preparations for the festivities leading to CNDD-FDD party's demonstration of force at the provincial level, scheduled for April 26, 2025, in Mahwa.

According to local sources, the political parties currently active are still CNDD-FDD, UPRONA, CDP, and PIEBU; evidence of this is the banners waving from their offices and the badges worn by their members. During that week, only the ruling party held a meeting.

**Finally, in Rutana commune,** a CNDD-FDD party meeting was held on April 21, 2025, in Gitaba hill and zone, in Rutana commune and province. The following day, April 22, 2025, a meeting with the same objective was held in Gahuna and Mikurira quarters in Rutana zone, commune, and province. Other meetings were held on April 26, 2025, on Rongerero and Karinzi hills in Rutana zone, com-

mune, and province.

We should recall that in all these meetings, the agenda items were peace, security, and preparation for the elections.

**As for Makamba province,** it was more specifically in Kayogoro commune where CNDD-FDD party meetings took place on April 21, 2025, with the following agenda items: peace, security, and preparation for CNDD-FDD party's show of force in Burunga province. According to local sources, CNDD-FDD party, through its zonal committee, organized a visit by political mobilizers from Kayogoro zone to assess the progress of preparations for the 2025 elections and to prepare for the party's demonstration of force at the provincial level, which was scheduled for April 26, 2025, in Mahwa.

According to the same sources, on the same day, April 21, 2025, in Mugeni zone, the CNDD-FDD hill leader held a meeting with the Bakenyererurugamba of Kigomagoma hill. In Gatabo zone of the same commune, the head of the ruling party on Nkaramanyenye hill, accompanied by political mobilizers from this hill, led a meeting with all the leaders of the party's local cells. The agenda items included raising awareness about the collection of voter's cards during their distribution, which will begin in the coming days, and participation in various meetings organized by the party, especially those held every Saturday in the local cells.

According to the same sources, in this zone, on this very date, the ruling party organized an activity aimed at demonstrating CNDD-FDD party's force, attended by the Administrator's advisor in charge of economic, political, legal, and social affairs.

Thus, on April 22, 2025, on Kibimba hill, the Kayogoro zonal office organized a meeting whose agenda items included peace, security, election preparation, and preparation for the party's demonstration of force in Burunga province.

On April 23, 2025, a meeting of CNDD-FDD party members was held on Musenga sub-hill, Shaka hill, Dunga zone. According to local sources, a CNDD-FDD party zonal committee visited this location and the agenda items were still peace, security and preparation for elections.



According to our sources, on that same date, in Gatabo zone, there was a visit by political mobilizers to local cells No. 24; 25; 26; 27; 28; 29 and 30 of Nkaramanyenye hill with the aim of sensitizing the Bagumyabanga to participate massively in the festivities aimed at the party's show of force at the provincial level scheduled for April 26, 2025 in Mahwa.

On April 25, 2025, the Deputy Head of the Imbonerakure Youth League in Makamba commune held a meeting with young girls affiliated with CNDD-FDD party in Kayogoro commune to sensitize them to participate massively in the ruling party's show of force activities scheduled for April 26, 2025 in Mahwa.

On April 27, 2025, the Secretary General of CNDD-FDD party visited Mugeni and Gatabo zones. According to sources on site, in his speech, he used

## **1.2. JUDICIARY CONTEXT**

### ***Non-respect of legal procedure to transfer two CNL members illegally detained 16 days before their transfer to Makamba prosecutor's office***

On April 23, 2025, two members of the opposition party, CNL (National Congress for Liberty) were transferred to Makamba prosecutor's office after 16 days of detention in Kayogoro communal police station cells, two days beyond the legal period provided by Burundian law, which limits police custody to a maximum of 14 days.

The persons concerned are Gatore Thierry and Ndayishimiye Thierry, who were arrested on April 7 on Mugeni hill, in Kayogoro commune, Makamba province. Their arrest was carried out not by the judicial police, but by leaders of the pro-government Imbonerakure group, namely Marc Bikorimana and Pierre Nsabimana, acting with the communal commissioner. This method of arrest raises numerous questions regarding compliance with legal procedures.

### **Leaflets at the origin of the manhunt**

The two members were arrested following the discovery of leaflets in several localities in Kayogoro and in other provinces such as Rutana, attributed to a group calling itself Burundi Democracy Libe-

language that is not strange to him, considering his usual speeches: "*Uwuzorukarisha ruzomumwa, uwuzowucana bazowumuzimirizako kandi ntibazokoresha amazi.*" (Literal translation: ***Whoever sharpens the blade will cut by the blade. Whoever stirs up the fire will be extinguished without water.***) We should also recall that even the authorities of different religious denominations operating in Kayogoro commune had been informed that their services should end at 10 a.m. to free the population.

### **UPRONA party follows the ruling party in Rutana commune and province**

On April 27, 2025, on Museno hill, in Rutana zone, commune, and province, UPRONA party held a meeting. According to local sources, the day's agenda included only one item: preparations for the elections.

ration Force (BDF Abisezerano). These documents, containing content critical of the current regime, were quickly attributed to CNL members, although direct evidence of their involvement has still not been made public.

The appearance of these leaflets sparked a wave of targeted intimidation against CNL members in the region. Several local party figures were forced to flee, including the CNL leader in Mugeni zone, Niyongabo Térance, accompanied by Nyabenda Firmin and Jean Berchmans. All three have now been in hiding for over two weeks.

### **A worrying trend according to observers**

This series of events highlights what some observers describe as the "criminalization of the opposition" in Burundi. The active participation of Imbonerakure in arrest operations, the lack of a clear judicial warrant, and the no respect of legal detention limits illustrate, according to human rights defenders, a political climate still marked by intimidation and arbitrariness. No official response from the prosecutor's office has yet been provided regarding the exact charges against Gatore Thierry and Ndayishimiye Thierry, nor the expected length of their pre-trial detention.

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

#### **Election of a new administrator for Vyanda commune, Bururi province**

The Vyanda communal council, in Bururi province, elected Évangéline Manirakiza as the commune's administrator on Wednesday, April 23, 2025. The election was held at the communal office in the presence of 13 of the 18 council members. Evangeline Manirakiza obtained 12 votes out of 13, a clear victory demonstrating a broad consensus around her candidacy. The other five councilors were absent during the vote.

This election comes at a particular time, marked by a vacancy in the position following the detention of the former communal administrator, Alexis Nshimirimana. Nshimirimana is currently jailed in

Mpimba Central Prison. He is facing charges of embezzling several tons of maize collected by the National Agency for Strategic Management of Food Stocks (ANAGESSA).

The communal council deemed it urgent to fill this position to ensure the continuity of administrative activities and the stability of local management. Evangeline Manirakiza thus becomes the first woman to head the communal administration of Vyanda, a strong signal in favor of inclusion and good governance. She is expected to take office in the coming days, following the completion of required administrative formalities. Evangeline Manirakiza, a Hutu woman, is a CNDD-FDD party member. She also replaces a Hutu and member of the ruling party.

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

The security context was characterized during the period covered by this report by the following salient facts:

#### **Imbonerakure accused of sowing terror in the run-up to elections in Bubanza commune**

Information received by Ligue Iteka dated April 27, 2025, indicates that in Bubanza province, the electoral campaign is being intoxicated by serious accusations targeting the Imbonerakure: death threats, hate speech, and intimidation against the opposition are plunging the population into a climate of fear, while local authorities struggle to reassure people.

In the five communes of Bubanza province, tensions are rising as the election approaches. The Imbonerakure are accused of harassing and intimidating opposition members, demanding a unanimous vote for the ruling party, under threat of reprisals. Death threats are even made against those who express a different choice. Nighttime meetings and community gatherings are turning into forums for hate speech, inciting the rejection and even lynching of opponents.

*"The ruling party is trying to force the population to vote for it to avoid mass abstention,"* reveals a source close to the provincial administration. Illegal methods, such as requiring photo proof of voting, are reportedly being considered to guarantee victo-

ry.

Thus, opposition members are scared, particularly within CNL party. Some members are living in hiding, while others have fled the region. Ethnically motivated rhetoric is spreading throughout the hills, rekindling tensions in the community. This identity manipulation appears aimed at dividing and rule.

The governor of Bubanza province, Cléophas Nizigiyimana, acknowledged having heard of these actions but indicated that he had not received any official complaints. He called for calm and the preservation of peace.

Concern remains palpable in this province with its turbulent political background, where the specter of electoral violence looms large.

#### **Incursion into the DRC and desertions among the Imbonerakure**

Information received by Ligue Iteka on April 27, 2025, indicates that in the province, according to revelations from a former demobilized FDD member, around one hundred young Imbonerakure, stationed in a training camp in Cibitoke for the enlisting in the DRC, crossed the border during the night of Saturday, April 19, to Sunday, April 20, 2025.

The same source indicates that they were initially 450. However, after learning that they would be

paid by the DRC following the reintegration of the Wazalendo into the FARDC, 350 of them deserted. This message was reportedly transmitted by Deo, president of CNDD-FDD party's council of elders in the new province of Bujumbura, a member of Bahumure organization. According to the latter, the Wazalendo number would be 3,000, while the FARDC army is reportedly planning to reintegrate at least 10,000. Thus, these Imbonerakure and the burundian demobilized would supplement the

Wazalendo to fight and integrate into the Congolese army, in order to reach the wanted number.

This Bahumure official then reportedly asked those who did not wish to join the Congolese army to register to organize their return. However, they did not opt to register and deserted individually and clandestinely. Ultimately, 350 returned to their families, while only about 100 opted to cross into the DRC.

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

### **II.1. RIGHT TO LIFE**

#### **II.1.1. Body found**

##### **The body of a man found in Muramvya commune**

On April 23, 2025, at around 6:00 a.m., a man's body was found on Burambana hill, Muramvya commune and province. According to eyewitnesses, the body was immediately identified by passersby. It was Vyuzura Jean, 67 years old, son of Kanyoni and Mperabanyanka, a farmer from the same hill.

According to the same witnesses, the victim had spent Tuesday, April 22, at the funeral of his friend on the neighboring Murambi hill. According to the same sources, those who saw him that day around 6:00 p.m. said he was very drunk, having consumed a large quantity of a local drink called "Tafauti," which has a very high alcohol content. The body showed no injuries. The police have started their investigation, and the body remains in the mortuary at Muramvya Hospital.

#### **II.1.2. Persons killed following mob justice**

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

On the night of April 24, 2025, around 4 a.m., on Mungwa hill and zone, Gitega commune and province, Jean Vyimana, aged 43, was killed by the population of the locality. According to local sources, the shop of 30-year-old Enock Niyonkuru was robbed by a group of thieves. According to local sources, the local population was alerted by Enock's screams and then surrounded the locality to stop the group of thieves. Thus, Vyimana Jean was apprehended and beaten to death, while his friends were able to flee. Jean Vyimana was from Muramba hill, Bugenyuzi commune, Karusi province, son of Ciza Claver and Nizigiyimana Marie, as indicated by his National Identity Card found in his pocket. The body was taken to the mortuary of Gitega Regional Hospital on the orders of Nkeshimana Emmanuel, the head of Mungwa zone and OPJs Mpawenayo Jeanine and Manirakiza Dismas, who arrived at the scene around 8 a.m. to make the report but did nothing to arrest the alleged perpetrators of this mob justice.

##### **A person killed in Muhanga commune, Kayanza province**

Information received by Ligue Iteka on April 26, 2025, indicates that on April 19, 2025, on Mubuga sub-hill of Bushoka hill in Muhanga commune, Kayanza province, 67-year-old Ndarugendamwo Ode was killed by his neighbors who beheaded him with a machete, accusing him of sorcery. According to eyewitnesses, the victim was collecting fodder for her livestock when she was killed. Her body was first seen by one of her neighbors, Ndayikengurukiye Febronie, aged 34, when she came to fetch fire from the victim's house and who subsequently alerted the victim's neighbors. This information was confirmed by Benoît Ndayizeye, Muhanga communal administrator. Reports from Mubuga sub-hill indicate that nine persons close to the victim were arrested by the police for judicial investigations and taken to Muhanga communal police station cell where they are detained since Monday, April 21. The alleged perpetrators of Mubuga sub-hill, Bushoka hill who were arrested are:

1. Niragira Benoît, 27 years old,
2. Kubwimana Philbert, 25 years old,
3. Ngendakumana Lazare, 31 years old,
4. Ntikangishwa Renate, 65 years old,
5. Bangirimana Emmanuel, 50 years old,
6. Mperabanyanka Pie, 71 years old,
7. Ndayikengurukiye Febronie, 34 years old,

### ***II.1.3. Persons killed by unidentified people***

#### **A girl's body found in Buyengero commune, Rumonge province**

On the night of April 21, 2025, on Gasenyi hill, Mudende zone, Buyengero commune, Rumonge province, a girl living alone in a house was killed by unidentified people. Local administrative authorities indicate that the young girl was killed by people who stole a sum of money from her after she sold her land located on the same hill. According to administrative sources, the police have started investigations to clarify the causes of her death and find the alleged perpetrators.

#### **One person killed in Ntega commune, Kirundo province**

On the same day, April 21, 2025, on Gitwenzi hill, Ntega commune, Kirundo province, Kabonerano Jean, aged 57 was murdered with machetes by as yet unidentified individuals 300 meters from Gatwe hill. According to local sources, he had spent the evening with his wife sharing a glass of banana beer. The victim was a member of CNDD-FDD party but had not participated in the party's activities a year earlier and was suspected of having changed his ideology to become a member of CNL. Local authorities were present, but no action was taken to initiate investigations.

#### **A body of a girl found in Mugamba commune, Bururi province**

On April 22, 2025, on Mpota hill in Mugamba commune, Bururi province, the lifeless body of Nadège Kezakimana, a 26-year-old with no political affiliation, was found on this hill on the road leading to

8. Bamboneyeho Séraphine, 59 years old,

9. Manirambona Nestor, 61 years old.

Ndayizeye Benoît, communal administrator of Muhanga, indicates that the inhabitants of this locality of Bushoka find themselves in constant conflicts, accusing each other of witchcraft, and calls on them to put an end to superstitious beliefs and instead to Confide in health facilities in case of illness instead of always thinking about witchcraft.

Tora Market. According to witnesses, this girl had left her home on Monday evening to go to the Tora Tea Complex, where she was part of a team of employees who were supposed to work at night, according to a family member. While some say she was killed by unknown assailants, based on the traces found on her body and on a tree not far from where it was discovered, Venuste Ntahombaye, the administrator of Mugamba commune, said the girl was struck by lightning on Monday evening.

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

On the afternoon of April 22, 2025, in the early evening, the body of a young street vendor, approximately 15 years old, was found at stree 9 on Rusiga hill, in Rugombo commune, not far from Cibitoke town center. Although the exact circumstances of this tragic death remain unknown, some voices within the population are quick to accuse some Imbonerakure. An investigation has been opened to shed light on this case.

Although a security source contacted on the scene suggested the possibility of a robbery gone wrong, this version does not convince most of the population. Many residents, visibly stunned by this event, point the finger at the Imbonerakure, the CNDD-FDD party youth wing, whom they accuse of sowing terror in the region. Local authorities are working to ease tensions. Gilbert Manirakiza, the communal administrator of Rugombo, confirmed the discovery of the body and called on the population to fully cooperate with security forces.

The victim's body was transferred to the provincial

hospital mortuary for investigation. Pending the results, the residents of Cibitoke express their strong desire to know the full truth about this crime and hope that justice will be served.

#### **A man killed in Itaba commune, Gitega province**

On April 23, 2025, at around 7 p.m. on Buhevyi hill, in Itaba commune, Gitega province, Bakevyumusaya Déo, a married man aged 57, was brutally murdered with machetes in front of the entrance to his home. According to witnesses, the reason for the murder was linked to accusations of sorcery against the victim, and the perpetrators had not been identified as of Thursday afternoon. According to the same sources, no police investigation has been opened to date. Only the presence of Nyandwi Domitien, the communal administrator, was reported at the scene; he urged the local to avoid mob justice. The body of Bakevyumusaya Déo was buried this Thursday afternoon in Itaba cemetery on the orders of the Administrator.

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

On March 23, 2025, in Kanyenkoko quarter of Rumonge commune and province, the body of Frédéric Nimubona, a fisherman at the port of Rumonge, was found in his home, according to our local sources. The circumstances of his death remain unknown, and his body was taken to the mortuary at Rumonge hospital.

#### **A body found in Muha commune, Bujumbura mairie**

On April 23, 2025, at around 1 a.m., in Kibenga quarter of Kinindo zone, Muha commune, Bujumbura mairie, the decomposing body of Prosper Sindabakwira, aged 50, was found in a house where he lived.

#### ***II.1.4. Persons killed following the settlement of scores***

#### **A CNDD-FDD party member killed in Bururi commune and province**

On April 24, 2025, in Kavumvu locality, Rushemeza hill in Bururi commune and province, Libère Ndayiragije, a 60-year-old CNDD-FDD party member, was strangled to death by his half-brother, Minani Méchac, a 50-year-old member of the same party.

According to local witnesses, the victim was from Gatoke, Mungwac commune zone, Gitega province, and his body was uninjured. The perpetrators and the circumstances of this murder remain unknown. The same witnesses added that the victim's body was recovered by the administration, including Kibenga quarter head, Oscar Bizimana, and the Red Cross agents, for burial.

Investigations are underway to determine the exact circumstances of this death, although relatives suggest a possible drowning.

#### **A body found in Muha commune, Bujumbura mairie**

On April 23, 2025, at around 6:00 a.m., the body of an unidentified man was found in Kinindo zone, Ntwarante Avenue, Muha commune, Bujumbura mairie. The victim's body had injuries suggesting that he had been tortured before being killed and abandoned there. On the orders of Dévotte Ndayisenga, administrator of Muha commune, the body was transferred to Roi Khaled Hospital mortuary.

#### **A body found in Gashoho commune, Muyinga province**

On April 26, 2025, on Muyange hill, Gashoho commune, Muyinga province, the body of Hakizimana Maurice, aged nearly 70, was found in the morning. According to local witnesses, the grandfather's body had marks on his neck indicating that he was strangled to death as he was returning home. His two grandsons, who lived with him, had reported the incident when he did not return home. The police made a report, and the body was taken to the mortuary. The perpetrators and the reason for this crime are unknown.

The conflict began over a cedar tree. According to their neighbors, the victim was strangled while trying to prevent Méchac from cutting down the tree, which actually belonged to Ndayiragije Libère. The man's body was taken directly to the mortuary at Bururi regional hospital. The alleged perpetrator was arrested and taken to Bururi provincial police station cell by the police to investigate the case.

### ***II.1.5. Persons abducted and/or missing***

#### **A CNL party member abducted in Mutimbuzi commune, Bujumbura province**

On April 21, 2025, Christophe Masimo, treasurer of CNL party in Mutimbuzi commune, Bujumbura province, was abducted while in his rice field in Maramvya.

According to local sources, Gaddafi, an Imbonerakure in Maramvya, approached him claiming to want to buy rice seeds. After obtaining his consent, Gaddafi allegedly asked Christophe to follow him for the payment. Since then, Christophe has not re-

turned to his field or his home.

His relatives and family, fearing for his safety and having searched for him in vain, are demanding that this young Imbonerakure, Gaddafi, be brought to justice to reveal Christophe's whereabouts.

Christophe resided at the 15<sup>th</sup> street in Maramvya. He is the second CNL member loyal to Agathon Rwasa to be abducted in this locality in April. The first, Fidèle Nkorumbone, was abducted on April 2, 2025, by SNR agents, including Atia Nduwimana. Fidèle remains missing to date.

## ***II.2. PHYSICAL AND/OR MENTAL INTEGRITY***

### ***II. 2.1. Torture and other cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment***

#### **A child burned in Bukirasazi commune, Gitega province**

Information received by Ligue Iteka on April 26, 2025, indicates that on April 15, 2025, at around 1:00 p.m., on Migano hill, in Bukirasazi commune, Gitega province, Igiraneza Don Brillant, an 8-year-old second-year student at ECOFO Bukirasazi, was burned on the hands by her mother, Bizimana Emelyne. She accused him of stealing a 2,000 Bif note. Alerted by a child rights activist, the authorities intervened quickly, and Bizimana Emelyne was arrested and taken to Bukirasazi commune cell, then transferred to Gitega provincial police station cell to await trial. The victim was unable to complete her second-term exams following this incident.

#### **A man beaten by Imbonerakure on the orders of a local administrator in Cankuzo commune and province**

On April 22, 2025, Léonidas Hatungimana, married, father of 5 children, residing on Muyaga hill, in Cankuzo commune, was arrested around 4 p.m. by 5 Imbonerakure, on the orders of Alexandrine

Rwaramaze, Muyaga hill head. He was taken to a forest: a place called "ikosorero" on this hill (place of correction, literally translated) and beaten on the back and legs until traces of injuries appeared. He was released upon payment of 50,000 Bif via lumicash to the account of one of these 5 Imbonerakure by the victim's wife to save his life. He was accused of absence to manual work maintaining trees planted on Nyamusenga hill by CNDD-FDD, near Muyaga hill.

And yet, he had contributed 5,000 Bif collected from his commercial kiosk and 9 cups of corn collected at his home.

The next day, April 23, 2025, he filed a complaint with Boniface Banyiyezako, Governor of Cankuzo province, against Alexandrine Rwaramaze, head of Muyaga hill. Governor Boniface Banyiyezako called Alexandrine Rwaramaze to appear in his office for explanation. The outcome of this complaint is unknown. The victim, Léonidas Hatungimana, is a ruling party member and trader, and admits to regularly contributing to the party whenever necessary.

### ***II.2.2. Sexual and gender-based violence***

#### **Attempted rape in Rumonge commune and province**

On April 23, 2025, at around 2:00 p.m., on Nyakuguma hill, Kirwena zone in Rumonge commune and province, a 12-year-old girl named Niyompundu was harassed and nearly raped by an unidentified man. According to witnesses, the victim had

gone to collect firewood and met a stranger who tried to rape her. Fortunately, she cried for help, and passersby intervened; unfortunately, the perpetrator fled.

It should be noted that the child was orphan and was a victim of abuse committed by her stepmother. The survivor received no support.



## ***II.3. RIGHT TO LIBERTY***

### ***II.3.1. Persons arbitrarily arrested and detained***

#### **Two journalists arrested and released at Bujumbura mairie**

On April 21, 2025, at around 10:00 a.m., journalist Willy Kwizera of Radio Bonesha FM and Ahmad Masudi Mugiraneza of Radio Nderagakura were arrested by the police while covering a sit-in by victims of fraud at COOPEDI cooperative in front of INEZA IWACU microfinance institution.

The two journalists were first taken to Kinama zone cell before being transferred to BSR for questioning. They were then detained at this police station, accused of rebellion and insurrection. Contacted by Radio Bonesha FM management, Police Colonel Habimana Pascal, head of the OPJs at the BSR, stated that the journalists had been informed of the demonstration in advance but had not notified the police. He thus identified them as planners, also involving the radio stations that had sent them,

in a plot to destabilize the security of the mairie during the election period. He specified that they would have to wait for a decision from the hierarchy.

However, around 5:30 p.m., communal Commissioner Eduard Mukoko called the directors of Radio Nderagakura and Radio Bonesha FM to announce the journalists' release, citing misunderstanding. He also decided to release around 100 people who had been arrested in Kinama following the sit-in.

According to media professionals, this arrest illustrates the level of violations of press freedom in Burundi. They denounce the arrest of journalists in the exercise of their duties, especially since the new 2024 press law has decriminalized some press offenses. Burundian media professionals call for respect for the law, press freedom, and the profession of journalism.

### ***II.3.2. Right to individual liberty and freedom of movement***

#### **A woman detained for inability to pay hospital bills in Gitega province**

Niyonzima Clémence, a 65-year-old woman from Mitimiri hill, Giheta commune, Gitega province, was a caregiver for her husband Mathias Kobero, who was seriously ill for 10 months at Kibimba Hospital in Giheta commune. Despite their poverty, she remained in the hospital as a caregiver until her husband's death in November 2024.

After his death, Kibimba Hospital administration, headed by Dr. Nahimana Elysé, demanded payment of a bill of 7 million Burundian francs. According to an eyewitness, Clémence is poor and has no financial resources to pay this bill. As a result, she has been forcibly detained within the hospital since November 2024. This woman is starting to show signs of psychological distress as she is being guarded to prevent her from leaving the hospital entrance.

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

### ***III.1. RIGHT TO EDUCATION***

#### **Exam theft at DCE Bugendana**

A serious incident occurred at DCE Bugendana surrounding the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade Entrepreneurship exam scheduled for Friday, April 11, 2025. The day before, Thursday, April 10, 2025, a teacher of this course at ECOFO Mukoro, Mukeshimana Léopold, had his 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students review for the exam at Bugendana Communal High School.

This relocation was due to the fact that ECOFO Mukoro buildings had been destroyed by torrential rains. During this unusual revision session, some

parents of ECOFO Bugendana II students who were taking the exam in parallel rooms surprised the students in possession of complete copies of the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade Entrepreneurship exam and the latter came to Ecofo Bugendana to denounce this case. The Director of Ecofo Bugendana II noted that this is indeed the exam distributed to the students.

The incident raised strong suspicions. Several students were questioned about the source of these documents. Bosco, the DCE's Education Inspector, discreetly conducted an investigation among the students of ECOFO Bugendana II. He discovered

that teacher Mukeshimana Léopold, known for his active involvement in CNDD-FDD party, was believed to be behind the leak. pals, while those responsible for this fraud remain free and unchallenged.

However, the outcome of this investigation has so far been kept secret. The official response was to cancel the exam in question. Surprisingly, however, this exam is now among the catch up exams scheduled for Tuesday, April 29, 2025, without any information being provided to teachers and principals. In this case, neither the school principals nor the DCE have taken any clear action, and the matter remains completely silent. This situation raises serious questions about the credibility of the school justice system and the impunity enjoyed by some individuals, to the detriment of the integrity of the education system.

#### ***IV. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS***

Ligue Iteka strongly denounces the persistent deterioration of human rights in Burundi and condemns the impunity of perpetrators of crimes. Faced with this alarming situation, Ligue Iteka urgently calls on the Burundian authorities to take immediate action to end these violations and guarantee justice and equality for all citizens:

##### **To the Government :**

- ⇒ Conduct rigorous, impartial, and transparent investigations to establish the facts and bring the alleged perpetrators to justice;
- ⇒ Respect press freedom and guarantee the safety of journalists;
- ⇒ Prevent all forms of violence and ensure a peaceful and credible electoral process;
- ⇒ Promote social cohesion, oppose all forms of identity manipulation, and hate speech;
- ⇒ Ban intimidation activities carried out by Imbonerakure, especially during this electoral period;
- ⇒ Guarantee the protection of fundamental rights and stop violence committed by Imbonerakure.