

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

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*Weekly bulletin « ITEKA N'IJAMBO » n°473 of the Burundian Ligue of Human Rights "ITEKA"*

**Week from 5-12 May 2025**



*In memory of Madam Marie Claudette Kwizera, Treasurer of Iteka, reported missing since December 10 2015. From December 2015 to 11 May 2025, Iteka has documented at least 729 cases of enforced disappearances*

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## **ACRONYMS**

<b>CDS</b>	: <i>Health Center</i>
<b>CENI</b>	: <i>Independent National Electoral Commission</i>
<b>CNDD-FDD</b>	: <i>National Council for the Defense of Democracy – Forces for the Defense of Democracy</i>
<b>CNL</b>	: <i>National Congress for Liberty</i>
<b>DCE</b>	: <i>Communal Director of Education</i>
<b>DPE</b>	: <i>Provincial Direction of Education</i>
<b>ECOFO</b>	: <i>Fundamental School</i>
<b>FDLR</b>	: <i>Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda</i>
<b>FLN</b>	: <i>National Liberation Forces</i>
<b>FRODEBU</b>	: <i>Front for Democracy in Burundi</i>
<b>OPJ</b>	: <i>Judicial Police Officer</i>
<b>UPRONA</b>	: <i>Union for National Progress.</i>

## 0. INTRODUCTION

This bulletin presents an alarming weekly human rights and security situation in Burundi.

This bulletin addresses the political, human rights, security, and judicial contexts that prevailed during the reporting period.

It also addresses civil and political rights and ends with a conclusion.

Thus, during this period, the human rights and security situation was reported as follows: 8 people were killed, including 1 for voluntary abortion, 3 people killed by State agents, 2 persons killed by unidentified people, and 2 people killed following a settling of scores. This bulletin also mentions 2 cases of torture, 4 cases of rape and gender based violence, 3 people abducted, and several cases of arbitrary arrest.

## I. CONTEXT

### I.1. POLITICAL CONTEXT

#### **UPRONA denounces the exclusion of its members from polling station members**

During a meeting held this Sunday, May 4, in Rugajo zone, the president of UPRONA party in the former province of Cibitoke, who is also vice-president in the new province of Bujumbura (comprising the former provinces of Bujumbura Mairie, Bujumbura Rural, Bubanza, and Cibitoke), denounced the non-compliance with Article 40 of the electoral code. He accused the ruling party of intimidating its members and called for a fair organization of the electoral process.

The political climate is tense as the elections approach in Cibitoke province. The president of UPRONA party in this province, Stanny Iranyibutse, expressed his dissatisfaction with what he describes as serious breaches of the electoral code. Speaking at a meeting with members of his party in Rugajo, in the new commune of Mugina, he stated that Article 40 of the electoral code was not respected in the appointment of polling station members.

*"No member of our party was selected to be part of the polling stations. This is blatant marginalization,"* he lamented. According to him, young people affiliated with CNDD-FDD party are increasing acts of intimidation against UPRONA members, preventing them from freely carrying out their political activities on the ground.

Faced with this situation, Iranyibutse calls on the

Independent National Electoral Commission to guarantee fair treatment of all the competing parties and to ensure transparency in the vote count. *"We ask the CENI to organize an inclusive and fair process. Each party must receive the votes it truly deserves,"* he insisted.

Despite the difficulties encountered, UPRONA members in the locality maintain their loyalty to their party and are confident of victory on the election day. *"We will not abandon UPRONA. We are calmly awaiting election day to demonstrate our strength at the polls,"* they declared.

#### **UPRONA party meeting in Ruyigi commune and province**

On May 10, 2025, UPRONA party held a meeting in the new commune of Ruyigi, which encompasses the former communes of Ruyigi, Bweru, and Butezi.

According to local sources, in his speech, Serges Njebarikanuye, the first secretary of UPRONA party in the new province of Buhumuza, invited party members to prepare to collect their voter's cards. He insisted that this opportunity should not be missed, as the distribution period is quite short, from May 12 to 14, 2025. He also urged party members not to give in to intimidation by young people affiliated with CNDD-FDD party.

He referred to the teachings disseminated by members of the ruling party that anyone who will not

vote for CNDD-FDD party will be killed or forced to exile. He also denounced the intimidation that anyone who is not ready to vote for CNDD-FDD party can give their voter's card to one of CNDD-FDD members and vote for them.

Among the young Imbonerakure mentioned in these teachings are Eliudi Ntakurutima, the Imbonerakure youth leader in Sanzu quarter; Isaïe Nsengiyumva, director of ECOFO Nkavyi; and Jean Claude Citegetse, alias Ciclo, a teacher at ECOFO Gasanda. He also mentioned the current fuel problem, which could hamper election campaign activities.

*"Despite all these constraints, UPRONA party is ready to compete with other parties,"* added the UPRONA party's first provincial secretary in Buhumuza province. UPRONA party will run in all communes in the provinces of Ruyigi and Cankuzo, except Gisuru, where only CNDD-FDD party will compete in this constituency.

### **Political parties organize for elections in Rutana province**

During the week of May 5-11, 2025, in Rutana province, CNDD-FDD political party held meetings for its members in almost all the communes. The agenda items were peace and security, election preparations, and the collection of voter's registration cards.

In Bukemba commune, on May 6, 2025, CNDD-FDD party held a meeting for its members in Gihofi to prepare for the upcoming elections.

For Giharo Commune, the meeting was scheduled for May 10, 2025. The ruling CNDD-FDD party held meetings in several zones: in Giharo, on Giharo, Nkudye, Kanyererwe, Bayaga, Mura, Gitanga, and Musenyi hills; in Gakungu zone, on Mugombwa, Murembera, Gakungu, Nyamatteke, and Ngomante hills; in Butezi zone, on Butezi, Rubanga, Mwebeya, Mutwana, and Buhogo hills; and in Muzye zone, on Muzye, Shembe, and Gatonga hills.

In Rutana commune, on May 9, 2025, a meeting was held with Bagumyabanga of Gitaba and Rutana zones. Political mobilizers from Rongerero zone organized a meeting with the Bagumyabanga of Rongerero hill.

In Mpinga-kayove commune, on May 10, 2025, political mobilizers from Mugondo zone organized meetings with the Bagumyabanga from all the hills in this zone.

Regarding Gitanga commune, on May 10, 2025, CNDD-FDD party office at the communal level (Rutana commune), according to the new territorial subdivision, met with teachers from CNDD-FDD party in the former commune of Gitanga.

It should be noted that throughout all the communes of Rutana province, almost all the polling station presidents are ECOFO directors and almost all the members are from CNDD-FDD party.

On May 11, 2025, at Rutana BPEAE Guest House, in Majambere quarter, in Rutana commune and province, the "BURUNDI BWA BOSE" coalition of political parties held a meeting for its activists in Rutana zone. The agenda included preparations for the elections, the collection of voter's registration cards, and the electoral campaign.

On May 10, 2025, SAHWANYA-FRODEBU party held a meeting for its members on Bugiga hill at Ntahobama's house to prepare for the upcoming election campaign.

### **CNDD-FDD party meeting, Kayogoro commune, Makamba province**

On May 6, 2025, in Kayogoro commune, Makamba province, CNDD-FDD party, through political mobilizers from Gatabo zone, organized a visit to local cells of Kibenga sub-hill. The agenda items included peace and security, election preparations, and the collection of voter's registration cards. On the same date, political mobilizers from Nkaramanyenye hill met with the Bagumyanga of the said hill to discuss the same items. In Mugeni zone, on the same date, they met with the Bakenyererurugamba of this zone to mobilize them to be the first to collect their cards. On May 8, 2025, political mobilizers from Gatabo zone met with the Bagumyanga of this zone to discuss the same items.

On May 10, 2025, in Mugeni zone, CNDD-FDD party bureau members at the zonal level, accompanied by the former communal administrator of Kayogoro, visited Buhema and Kigomagoma hills.

The items on the agenda were peace and security, election preparations, the collection of voter's cards, and preparations for the opening of the electoral campaign at BURUNGA provincial level, scheduled for May 16, 2025, and at the zonal level, scheduled for May 20, 2025.

### **CNDD-FDD party changes its outreach strategies in the former Cankuzo province**

Information received by Ligue Iteka on May 9, 2025, indicates that in Cankuzo province, CNDD-FDD party has changed its outreach tactics. According to local sources, groups of CNDD-FDD party members are being observed going door-to-door to urge their members to massively attend the registration center to collect their voter's cards. This phenomenon is observed in both urban and rural areas.

### **Hate speech in Kabarore commune, formerly Kayanza province**

On May 9, 2025, at Buyumpu hill in Rugazi zone of Kabarore commune, formerly Kayanza province, members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church organized community service activities. Gaspard Nsabiyaemye, a native of this hill, president of Kabarore communal council, and provincial inspector at Kayanza DPE in charge of human resources, attended the activities in the ruling party uniform, wearing an object resembling a rifle around his neck.

According to eyewitnesses, after the activities, he gathered the participants and spoke in very angrily. *"I am warning you, all the inhabitants of this Buyumpu hill, we are not joking anymore, we have left the country in the last years, we will not resume it; enough is enough. Know that when it is time to vote, we know that there are those who are disoriented by those who come from other parties like CNL, know that whoever votes for CNL must look for where to flee, he will not continue living on our hill, he should look early for where to go. So, we must strike while the iron is still hot, that is to say, on election day, each leader of the Inama shingiro must come at six o'clock in the morning with his militants."* According to the same eyewitnesses, the inhabitants of Buyumpu hill are afraid of this language from a man they considered wise and who holds positions in the communal council and in a

public institution like the provincial education direction. Since these words are uttered by an authority, just at the beginning of the electoral campaign, the inhabitants, especially the members of other political parties active in Kabarore, other than the ruling party, fear the worst in the middle of the electoral period if nothing is done to stop this kind of people of Gaspard Nsabiyaemye. Though, high authorities of the country, even the President, calls on Burundian population to remain calm despite their difference of political affiliation during this crucial period for the country, the elections.

### **Mass arrests and targeted violence against members of the "Burundi bwa Bose" coalition in Makamba province**

Several members of the "Burundi bwa Bose" coalition and CNL party have been arrested and threatened recently in several communes of Makamba province, southern Burundi. These incidents come amid growing tensions ahead of elections scheduled for June 5, 2025.

On Gasange hill in Makamba commune and province, Vincent Nzoyihaya, the coalition's representative on Gasange hill, was arrested and jailed in Makamba communal police station cell on May 7, 2025. On the same day, Gaspard Hatungimana, the coalition's leader in Kabuye zone of the same commune, was also arrested by police officers in collaboration with Imbonerakure. According to neighbors, he scarcely escaped imprisonment but has been in hiding ever since.

In the neighboring commune of Mabanda, two other coalition members were also arrested this week, in unclear circumstances according to Burundi bwa Bose coalition officials in Burunga province. The following Tuesday, members of the "Burundi bwa Bose" coalition, who had been previously arrested, were held harassed on Kabo hill. Youth affiliated with Imbonerakure accused them of alerting the police on the actions of Benjamin Niyoyankunze, one of their own, who allegedly attempted to cut off the arm of coalition member Jonas Niyomwungere on the night of Friday to Saturday. Despite the seriousness of the incident, Benjamin was not arrested, as the Imbonerakure of the commune strongly resisted the police's arrest.



On Buheka hill in Nyanza-Lac commune, a member nicknamed Parizi was also brutalized by Imbonerakure before being taken to a local position without apparent justification. According to the leaders of this coalition, their members are accused by Imbonerakure of possessing logos that are allegedly intended for use during the June election campaign. It should also be noted that in Kayogoro commune, two CNL members are currently jailed in Makamba prosecutor's office, while others are on the run. They are suspected of having participated in the distribution of leaflets in this commune. Leaders of the "Burundi bwa Bose" coalition denounce these acts, which they consider to be political intimidation tactics in the run-up to the elections.

### **Official launch of the electoral campaign in a tense atmosphere**

At Ingoma Stadium in Gitega, on May 9, 2025, Evariste Ndayishimiye, the President of the Republic, officially inaugurated the electoral campaign activities in the presence of representatives of political parties, diplomats, and journalists, but without the participation of the opposition, as the Burundi bwa Bose coalition had decided to boycott the event. This launch took place in a context of a lockdown of the electoral process, the exclusion of the opposition, and assertive presidential speeches, raising significant doubts about the transparency of the upcoming elections.

The Head of State warned those he suspected of wanting to sow trouble, declaring: *"Troublemakers will be prosecuted and will face 'exemplary' sanctions."* He designated some administrators, deemed close to the opposition, as *"agents of the devil."*

This worrying speech by the President and the installation of a disputed CENI send a clear message on the poor organization of the elections, contributing to an unhealthy electoral atmosphere. Political parties continue to denounce their total exclusion from electoral bodies. Indeed, Nestor Girukwishaka, CNL party leader, indicates that among the 77,780 polling station members, only 164 are from CNL, representing less than 0.23%. He also highlights an electoral climate marked by arbitrary arrests, destruction of offices, and intimidation of members.

It is noteworthy that this electoral campaign is beginning while the country is experiencing an unprecedented economic crisis: the currency is collapsing, youth unemployment is at its climax, fuel is scarce or nonexistent, and there is a dire shortage of necessities.

### **Harassment of opponents in Buhiga commune, Karusi province**

Allegations of harassment have been reported against the communal secretary of Buhiga commune, Karusi province, involving and including other members of CNDD-FDD, targeting political opponents. This Sunday, May 11, 2025, at approximately 5:00 p.m., on Rwingoma hill, in Buhiga zone and commune, at Mander Hotel, 11 families of civil servants and one family of a female farmer were summoned by the leader of CNDD-FDD, accompanied by the communal secretary of Karusi, named Innocent Niyonkuru, as well as Senator Nibirantije Jean Marie, represented by the zonal secretary Alexis Bandyatuyaga, and the communal leader of imbonerakure, MBAZUMUTIMA Elysée.

This meeting was held in the absence of these authorities. These families were summoned because they were not affiliated with CNDD-FDD. The message they received was to vote for CNDD-FDD, even though they were not members of the party. One of the participants took the floor to question why they were considered outsiders to CNDD-FDD. He mentioned a form of discrimination often cited by CNDD-FDD members, namely that they conduct secret censuses based on ethnicity and political affiliation.

However, these leaders responded that this was merely an awareness-raising exercise, despite the campaign had not yet been launched. They also offered them drinks, specifying that these drinks came from the Honorable and the SCOM. Although they tried to reassure them, these families returned home with concerns. These families are:

1. Ntahomvukiye Moïse,
2. Déo Ndayishimiye,
3. Philbert alias Musonotsi,

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<sup>1</sup>Burundi: A tense electoral campaign, between State threats and the sidelining of the opposition - SOS Media Burundi

4. Rugodo Salvator,
5. Ntemako J.Bosco,
6. Wansuramureka Adrien,
7. Ntakarutimana Sylvestre,
8. Bosco,
9. Nduwamahoro Innocent,
10. Jean Berchmans,
11. Ezéchiél
12. Nzomwitakuze Chany aka Bebe.

### **A flag torn in Buhinyuza commune, Karuzi province**

On May 2, 2025, around 7 p.m., on Kigoma hill, Buhinyuza zone, Buhiga commune, Karuzi province

#### **1.2. HUMAN RIGHTS CONTEXT**

##### **Appointment of new commissioners to the CNIDH following the defection of its President**

On May 8, 2025, Order No. 100/056 was issued, relating to the appointment of the CNIDH members, following a plenary session of the National Assembly held on May 5, 2025, to elect commissioners. The individuals appointed include Bishop Martin Blaise Nyaboho, Anglican Bishop of the Diocese of Makamba and belonging to the Hutu ethnic group, who will serve as President; Gérard Bigemintwaza as Vice-President; Béatrice Nkurunziza as Secretary; and Jean Bosco Manirambona, Ambassador Issa Ntambuka, Gloriane Nimenya as well as Dyna Ndayumvire as members.

The MP Niyonzima Constantin, head of the ad hoc recruitment commission for the CNIDH, informed the National Assembly during the plenary session of May 5, 2025, that a total of 114 candidates had submitted their applications, of which 21 were selected to be presented before the plenary to elect 7 CNIDH commissioners. The team thus constituted is composed of four Hutus and three Tutsis, an ethnic representation that the authorities advance as a guarantee of inclusivity, although critics point to a lack of diversity of points of view and experiences

vince, a UPRONA flag raised on this hill in a place called Ku kansoko (a small market in the center of the hill) was torn by Riyazimana Felix, Imbonerakure member of CNDD-FDD hill council. According to eyewitnesses, he was with three other unidentified Imbonerakure.

The next day, he was arrested by the police and taken to the provincial police station cell, where he spent the night. Since UPRONA members had filed their complaints with a judicial police officer, the perpetrator was summoned to the police station and questioned in the presence of UPRONA hill officials. He accepted the offense, although he refused to denounce his teammates. He signed a statement that he would find another flag and erect it in the same location. According to the same local witnesses, these Uprona members from the 1993 Tutsi displaced persons camp where this flag is installed swear that if he fails to respect these conventions, they will take justice into their own hands.

in human rights matters.

This appointment comes with the objective of replacing all members, five of whom will see their terms expire in June 2027. This situation occurs while Law No. 1/04 of January 5, 2011, governing the creation of the National Independent Commission for Human Rights, "CNIDH", is being revised, entailing further confusion. Before the implementation of this new law in amendment, Presidential Decree No. 100/056 of May 8, 2025 recently appointed a new team of 7 commissioners, which is against the aforementioned law. The said appointment takes place in a climate marked by mistrust, stressed internal divisions and significant rivalries.

Moreover, without prejudging its alleged responsibility in the mismanagement of the CNIDH's resources, a situation recently raised by the press with allegations of financial embezzlement surrounds the outgoing commission, which has recently been confirmed its status A, after a reassessment.

Since mid-April 2025, the Speaker of the National Assembly, Gélase Ndabirabe, has initiated a process to replace CNIDH members due to alleged "dysfunctions."



Its president, Dr. Sixte Vigny Nimuraba, was searched shortly before leaving the country with his family in April 2025.

Furthermore, according to Gélase Ndabirabe, while responding to MPs questions, these appointed commissioners are from political parties, which could compromise human rights. Furthermore, the appointment of Bishop Nyaboho, with controversial background, does not reassure everyone. His alleged ties to CNDD-FDD party and some of his previous statements raise doubts about his ability to

### ***1.3. SECURITY CONTEXT***

#### **Clashes in the Kibira**

Since 2020, conflicts in Kibira have been a constant issue. Although they did not directly pit FDLR and FLN forces against the Rwandan army at the Nyungwe/Kibira border, they generated struggles between these rebels and various FDN groups, whose commanders were unaware that some government figures were offering support to these rebels. The February 2023 fighting aimed to persuade Rwandan insurgents to support Burundian troops against the M23, while the recent incidents between April 28 and today pursue other objectives.

#### **First objective: arrests and secret detentions**

During the different conflicts, arrests have constantly taken place, and initially, captured rebels were held in Mabayi before being transferred to secret detention facilities, often far from human rights defenders or anyone seeking information on the ground. Regarding the fate of the arrested rebels, only Évariste Ndayishimiye and his intelligence services know their fate, but many sources suggest that several of them are executed without trial. However, it seems that the military's intention during these arrests was to interrogate them and hand them over to the Rwandan authorities. Whether or not they are transferred, few survive to provide possible false testimony in the event of a transfer to Rwanda. Recently, a group of five rebels, including a woman, was arrested, and one of them was executed after his capture. As of Monday, May 5, they were still being held in Mabayi.

represent an independent CNIDH.

In 2015, he harshly criticized the parents of two teenagers who died during protests against the former President Pierre Nkurunziza's controversial term, while he was head of Makamba Independent Provincial Electoral Commission. In 2019, he advocated for the citizen's mandatory contributions to finance the 2020 elections, suggesting excluding services from those who refused to contribute financially.

#### **Burundian civilians involved, arrested**

The CNDD-FDD government will never be able to deny its support for the Rwandan FDLR rebels since 2008 and the FLN since 2020. One of the most obvious pieces of evidence is that civilians, notably Imbonerakure, were instructed to assist these rebels by providing them with daily supplies and acting as guides through Kibira, a region unfamiliar to many of these rebels. These Imbonerakure, from Mabayi, were also responsible for showing the rebels the numerous mining sites they exploit.

During each conflict, arrests of Burundian rebels and civilians have been recorded. Accused of collaborating with the rebels, some of them still suffer in Mpimba and in secret cells; others were killed, such as Isidore Niyongabo, alias Maisha, communal secretary of Imbonerakure in Mabayi, and a former influential CNDD rebel, Matwi, betrayed by the regime for which he had fought and tortured to death.

#### **Second objective: Simulated clashes to eliminate weakened and ignored rebels.**

Since the 1994 Rwandan genocide, orchestrated and perpetrated by the MRND with the support of the FAR, from which the FDLR based in Kivu and Kibira emerged, only the DRC and Burundi support this group. The rest of the world seems indifferent. Although they are responsible, they deserve justice and protection. Unfortunately, this protection is denied them, and the international community, as well as human rights defenders, must investigate and realize that a silent massacre is taking place in

Burundi, mainly in Kibira, targeting Rwandan rebels.

It is important to remember that most of these rebels were between 15 and 50 years old at the time of the genocide. Those who survived are now in their forties, fifties, or even sixties, but many of them are no longer fit for combat, although they can support the group. Some of them are traders and live in Bujumbura as well as in southern African capitals such as Harare, Lusaka, Maputo, Lilongwe, and others, and even in Europe. It should be noted that the current fighters are young and come from the first generations or those who lost their lives previously. These fighters have been returning to the DRC since January, February, and March 2025 to support, whether voluntarily or forcibly, the FDN, the FARDC, and their militias against the M23.

These are those who remain in Kibira, for reasons of age or lack of opportunities, who belong neither to the first group (those leading normal lives while financially supporting the group) nor to the second group (those actively engaged in the fighting).

It is this third group that is currently experiencing violence in Kibira. With nowhere to go, Kibira is their only refuge. Ndayishimiye's regime no longer wants their presence.

### **Why then simulate fighting to eliminate individuals incapable of defending themselves?**

It is essential to emphasize that the ongoing fighting is simulated. Lacking the necessary strength to fight, the rebels are hunted down in their hiding places, captured, and shot to simulate conflict. Moreover, in recent days, there has been no real fighting, although casualties have been reported on the FDN side, due to the extreme courage of some rebels who were captured or killed while attempting to defend themselves.

With the withdrawal of SADC forces and the unexpected talks between Kinshasa and Kigali, Ndayishimiye's regime, accused of protecting and sheltering Rwandan rebels, is taking advantage of this massacre to cleanse Kibira, a move to clear its name in the eyes of the world (military source).

### **Third objective: Ndayishimiye's intention to gain exclusive control of the Kibira gold trade**

Far from the daily concerns of civilians, life in Kibira can seem completely primitive. An environment spotted with animals and flora, this territory is mainly home to rebels who have been present for more than fifteen years. They form village-like communities around gold mining areas, a resource that has always sustained their lives, trade, and travel.

Following the return of a large number of these rebels to the DRC, those still there must be eliminated to prevail the interests of the president and his entourage.

### **Search and theft in Ruyigi commune and province**

On May 8, 2025, the police conducted a search of shops located in Ruyigi commune city. According to local sources, this search targeted the drink called Good Wine. The same operation took place in Rusengo zone city, where boxes of this drink were seized from some sellers.

In the same commune, on May 10, 2025, a goat was stolen from Léonidas Ndariye's household in Sanzu quarter; the goat was slaughtered on the spot. Young Imbonerakure members are suspected of committing this theft, as they patrol all the quarters of Ruyigi urban center.

### **Nighttime escape from Bubanza prison: three inmates quickly caught**

Three inmates accused of robbery escaped from Bubanza prison on the night of May 9-10, 2025, around 7:00 p.m. Heavy gunfire was heard shortly after their escape, indicating a brief police chase. According to the prison administration, the fugitives were quickly caught and will face additional sanctions.

Residents near the prison report hearing heavy gunfire a few minutes after the escape. "The gunfire came from the prison. It was the police trying to catch the run-aways," said a witness on condition of anonymity. According to sources close to the prison administration, the three fugitives are from different localities: one from Musenyi, in Mpanda commune,

another from Musigati commune, both in Bubanza province, while the third is from Ngozi province.

The search launched immediately led to their rapid recovery. The prison administration reports that the three men were arrested and jailed again. They will be prosecuted for attempted escape in addition to the initial charges.

### **Resistance during the arrest of an Imbonerakure in Nyanza-Lac commune, Makamba province**

On May 5, 2025, on Kabo hill, Muyange zone, Nyanza-Lac commune, Makamba province, the arrest of Benjamin Niyoyankunze, Imbonerakure, prime suspect in the attack against Jonas

Niyomwungere, a member of Sahwanya-FRODEBU party and member of Burundi Bwa Bose coalition, failed. The attack took place on the night of May 2, 2025, and the victim escaped mutilation.

During the police intervention, a massive mobilization of Imbonerakure forcefully opposed the execution of the arrest warrant. Sharp tensions erupted, endangering physical safety of the police officers, who were forced to withdraw on orders from their hierarchy to prevent further escalation. The authorities have not yet made an official statement, but this incident highlights the growing difficulties associated with enforcing justice in a context of local political tensions.

## ***1.4. JUDICIAL CONTEXT***

### **Flagrance trial by Bururi High Court**

A man convicted of assault and battery resulting in the death of his half-brother, Minani Mechack, prosecuted for assault and battery resulting in the death of his half-brother, Ndayihereje, was sentenced to two years and six months of penal servitude. The Bururi High Court announced the verdict on the afternoon of May 6, 2025. The incident stems from a dispute between the two half-brothers, which resulted in the death of one of them. The prosecution, in a flagrante delicto trial held last Friday, had requested a twenty-year prison sentence for Minani Mechack.

However, the judges handed down a sentence lower than the indictment's request, adding financial com-

pensation. In addition to the prison sentence, the court ordered Minani Mechack to pay ten million francs to the deceased's wife as compensation. Failure to comply with this order could result in him being sentenced to fifty years of imprisonment, according to judicial sources. The case also involved other family members.

Minani Mechack's sister, Kabura Renilde, was found guilty of failing to assist a person in danger and ordered to pay two million francs to the victim's widow. However, Nshimirimana Jacqueline, another sister allegedly involved in the case, was acquitted by the court. Minani Mechack was prosecuted for killing his half-brother on April 25. The tragedy occurred on Rushemeza hill, Bururi commune and province.

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

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

#### ***II.1.1. INTENTIONAL HOMICIDE***

##### **Voluntary abortion in Bugenyuzi commune, Karuzi province**

On May 8, 2025, on Gashanga hill, Bugenyuzi zone and commune, Karuzi province, a 26-year-old member of CNDD-FDD, Muhayimana, voluntarily aborted a 7-month-old fetus with the assistance of an Imbonerakure named Fayida, a cleaner at Cinquantenaire Hospital in Karuzi. According to local

witnesses, she gave him 170,000 Fib, and the perpetrator of this pregnancy was Benjamin Bizimana, an Imbonerakure. Her husband left for Uganda a year and a half ago. After the abortion, Benjamin ran away, while the woman and the man who helped him were arrested by the police and taken to Bugenyuzi commune cell, where they have been jailed since May 9, 2025.

### ***II.1.2. PERSONS KILLED BY STATE AGENTS AND/OR IMBONERAKURE***

#### **One person killed, from Gisuru commune, Ruyigi province**

On May 4, 2025, Ndemera, a trader from Kabuyenge hill, Gisuru commune, Ruyigi province, was arrested by the Burundian police at Gisuru border post in the same commune and handed over to the Tanzanian police. Ndemera was accused of being in charge of a group of bandits who carried out armed robberies in the United Republic of Tanzania. He was killed by the Tanzanian police, and to this day his family continues to claim his body.

#### **A 60-year-old man killed in Murwi commune, Cibitoke province**

On the night of May 6-7, 2025, the body of Darius Nduwayo, aged 62, father of nine children, was found on Kigazi hill, Buhayira zone, Murwi commune, Cibitoke province.

According to eyewitnesses, Darius Nduwayo's body was found in his home, hacked to death while he slept.

According to local sources, the victim was attacked at night by unidentified individuals. However, two suspected ruling party Imbonerakure members are already arrested by the police. They are also close relatives of the deceased.

A security source claims that the two arrested youths are regularly involved in unexplained murder cases in the region. Their alleged involvement in this latest assassination could be motivated by a land dispute, recently settled by the courts in favor of Darius Nduwayo. Contacted for comment, Melchiad Nzokizwanayo, the commune administrator, firmly denied any involvement of the Imbonerakure in this case, describing the accusations as "unfounded."

The commune administration, through its representative, confirmed the facts and called on the population to remain calm, assuring that investigations are underway to clarify the circumstances of this murder.

### ***II.1.3. PERSONS KILLED BY UNIDENTIFIED PEOPLE***

#### **A body found in Ryansoro commune, Gitega Province**

On May 7, 2025, in the waters of Ruvyironza River, near Ndava hill, Ryansoro commune, Gitega province, the body of Léopold Mbisamatore, aged 42, was recovered by Red Cross agents. According to local sources, this body was reported by workers from SONGA ENERGY company on a hydroelectric power plant construction site.

Léopold Mbisamatore left home on May 2, 2025 for Ryansoro center and has not returned. Despite this situation, the police are talking about a drowning.

The victim's body was buried the same day.

#### **A body found in Gashikanwa commune, Ngozi province**

On May 8, 2025, on Rutanga hill, Gashikanwa commune, Ngozi province, the body of Claude Nkunzi- mana, aged 21, a member of CNL Rwasa's wing, was found hanging from a rope tied to a tree in a bean field. According to eyewitnesses, the reason for his death is unknown, and residents of the hill disagree on the cause. The police commissioner indicates that investigations are ongoing.

### ***II.1.4. PEOPLE KILLED FOLLOWING A SETTLEMENT OF SCORES***

#### **One person killed by his brother in Gisuru commune, Ruyigi province**

On May 5, 2025, on Nyarumashi sub-hill, Rusange hill, Gisuru zone and commune, Ruyigi province, Bizimana Augustin, aged 36, was beaten to death by his brother Msafiri Josias, a messenger at Gisuru COOPEC. According to local sources, this information was confirmed by Gad Ninganza, administrator

of Gisuru commune. These two brothers had been at odds over land disputes, and the case was before the Ruyigi High Court. Augustin had left his native hill to live in Ruyigi commune town.

On May 5, 2025, Augustin went to harvest his field in Gisuru and found that his brother's cattle had destroyed it. He called him to show him the damage caused by his cattle, and his brother Msafiri, his

wife, and their son came and beat him until he died. The victim's body is in Ruyigi Hospital mortuary because the deceased's family refused to organize the funeral, forcing Msafiri's family to organize it themselves. Msafiri, his wife, and his son are currently jailed at Ruyigi provincial police station.

### **One person killed in Muruta commune, Kayanza province**

Information received by Ligue Iteka dated May 10, 2025, indicates that as of April 16, 2025, in Kayanza province, there was a project called "Merankabandi" working with vulnerable families, but targeting women. This project then began providing money and phones to vulnerable women, and each received 72,000 Bif for the months of March and April 2025.

### **II.1.5. PERSONS ABDUCTED AND/OR MISSING**

#### **A person abducted in Ntakangwa commune, Bujumbura mairie**

On May 6, 2025, at around 7:00 p.m., in the locality known as ku kasoko (small market), located in Buterere II zone, Ntakangwa commune, Bujumbura mairie, Jean Marie Nizigiyimana, a 60-year-old father of six, a member of CNL party, pro-Agathon RWASA, was boarded by police officers without being shown an arrest warrant.

According to eyewitnesses, the victim was a resident of quarter 1, Buterere II, Ntakangwa commune, Bujumbura mairie and was trading at Kamenge zone market. According to the same witnesses, several police officers arrived around 7 p.m., accompanied by an Imbonerakure named Claude, who also lives in Buterere II. They pointed at the victim, then rushed toward him before beginning to beat him. A motorcycle then arrived, and the citizen was taken away to an unknown destination.

Local sources confirmed to us that the victim had just spent some time in hiding, after escaping an arrest attempt in 2023 by Joseph Mathias Niyonzi-ma, known as Kazungu.

According to local sources, on April 24, 2025, on Nkongwe hill, Muruta commune, Kayanza province, a 32-year-old woman named Nduwayo Donat received the money on her phone. On April 26, 2025, she withdrew the money from her phone and started drinking alcoholic beverages. According to the same sources, her husband, named Kanyeshamba Bernard, ordered her to return home, and the woman refused. Her husband came home alone, leaving his wife in the bar.

Around 6 p.m., the woman came home, and when her husband tried to show her that she was starting to behave badly, the woman took a small, worn hoe (agafuni) and beat him on the head. The victim died immediately. The woman is now in Kayanza province cell.

#### **A soldier abducted in Ntakangwa commune, Bujumbura mairie**

On the morning of May 9, 2025, a soldier was abducted in Gasenyi quarter, Ntakangwa commune, Bujumbura mairie.

Eric worked for G2 military intelligence service. He was abducted from his home in Gasenyi by a group of soldiers who burst into his home, arrested him, and took him to an as-yet-unknown location. It is suspected that he was arrested by his G2 colleagues. His family and friends are concerned for his safety.

#### **Person abducted in Ntakangwa commune, Bujumbura mairie**

On May 10, 2025, at around 10 p.m., Aimé Niyongabo was abducted, just after arriving at his home in Kinama, Gitega II quarter, 85<sup>th</sup> Avenue 11, Ntakangwa commune, Bujumbura mairie.

According to an eyewitness, Aimé Niyongabo, a 34-year-old trader, was abducted by as-yet-unidentified individuals. Witnesses to the scene reported that a dark-colored double-cab Toyota pickup truck parked in front of his home. Upon his arrival, individuals in civilian clothes got out, threw him into the vehicle, which then fled.

## **II.1.6. THREAT TO LIFE AND PERSONAL SAFETY**

### **Attempted kidnapping of a MP in Ntahangwa commune, Bujumbura-Mairie**

On May 10, 2025, at around 8:00 p.m., Honorable Jean Baptiste Sindayigaya was almost kidnapped at the 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue of Gare du Nord, in Kamenge zone, Ntahangwa commune, in Bujumbura Mairie.

In fact, the MP was elected in Kirundo province and is a native of the same province, Gitobe commune. He lives in Bujumbura Marie, Ntahangwa commune, Rubirizi zone. That day, he was from Mwaro province and, upon arriving at the 1st Avenue, a Toyota double-cabin pickup with tinted windows blocked the way of the vehicle he was traveling in. Then, armed people in civilian clothes got out and tried to force him into their vehicle. They tried to force him into the car, but he resisted, shouting for help. His driver and bystanders intervened, including the police officers who were on the scene. These police officers managed to save him, though

he was beaten up and tortured until his left eye was injured. He is undergoing intensive treatment at an undisclosed location for his safety.

These threats against this MP are reportedly linked to a question he asked to the Minister of Foreign Affairs during a plenary session on the granting of national identity cards and plots of land in Bujumbura town, with the complicity of local authorities in different quarters. In his response, the Speaker of the National Assembly appeared to threaten the MP, arguing that this would not be a problem and that Burundians should also go to the Republic of Congo to apply for and settle there. This situation arises when national and international organizations are denouncing the presence of FDLR elements who often hide among the Congolese, some seeking to integrate into Bujumbura. As a result, the Burundian authorities could consider this MP, a member of CNDD-FDD, as a threat to them and to the coun-

## **II.2. RIGHT TO PHYSICAL INTEGRITY**

### **II.2.1. TORTURE, CRUEL, INHUMAN, OR DEGRADING TREATMENT OR PUNISHMENT**

#### **A person tortured in Tangara commune, Ngozi province**

On May 5, 2025, at 10:00 p.m., Mudende Jean Paul was beaten by five police officers who were accompanying the head logistics officer until he was evacuated to Musenyi Community Hospital in Tangara commune, Ngozi province.

According to eyewitnesses, Mudende was the victim of a police officer asking his wife why she was returning home late from the bar while she was accompanied by them. Following this incident, the Tangara police commissioner decided to jail the woman in police custody until May 6, 2025.

The "De corps" police officer who triggered this insecurity escaped from the growing anger of Tan-

gara residents into Ngozi police station.

#### **CNL party member tortured in Mukaza commune, Bujumbura mairie**

On May 4, 2025, a CNL party member was beaten by Imbonerakure in Nyakabiga I quarter, on 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Mukaza commune, Bujumbura mairie.

According to an eyewitness, Aimable Ndayisaba was returning home from work when he encountered young Imbonerakure on patrol. They stopped him and began beating him with sticks. He was saved by passersby who heard his screams and the words they said as they were beating him: "*hasha iyombwa y'umu CNL*." He received the necessary care at the SOS Medical Center in Nyakabiga.

### **II.2.2. RAPE AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE**

#### **A woman raped in Mbuye commune, Muramvya province**

On May 8, 2025, on Rwuya hill, Mbuye commune, Muramvya province, Bizimana Anitha, a 34-year-old farmer married to Niyondiko Laurent, was raped by two men, all neighbors on the same hill. According to eyewitnesses, Anitha had shared local

beer with Nsavyimana Dedith, aged 38, and Nzitunga Celeus, aged 40, both farmers and members of CNDD-FDD, at a trading center in Rwuya, some 500 meters from her home.

These two men asked her to accompany her. She agreed. According to the same eyewitnesses, they arrived near a bush near her home around 7 p.m.



and demanded her to undress and sleep with them, which she refused. They tied her up with her loin-cloth and raped her one after the other.

After the act, she managed to scream, which alerted the neighbors. They came and found her naked. The next morning, she was able to denounce the perpetrators because she knew them. She was taken to Muramvya Hospital, and medical tests confirmed the rape.

Her husband went to Mbuye communal police station to file a complaint, and OPJ Adjutant Major Ndikumana Salomon arrested Nitunga Celeus while the other, Nsavyimana Dedith, escaped. The alleged perpetrator is currently in Mbuye police cell for interrogation, and the police are currently looking for the other alleged perpetrator.

#### **A student sexually abused and impregnated by a trader in Mabayi commune, Cibitoke province**

Information received by Ligue Iteka on May 11, 2025, indicates that Hosiane Irakoze, a fourth-grade student at ECOFO Rutabo, in Butahana zone of Mabayi commune, is two months pregnant after being sexually abused by a trader known as Kubwayo.

This trader owns a bar called "Ku Gikuta." This bar, like other bars in areas where 85% of the population are gold miners, houses brothels facilitating prostitution, of which minors are the primary vic-

tims. The local administration is accused of facilitating negotiated transactions between the perpetrators and the victims' families. Kubwayo is a recidivist who was free thanks to bribes, and Hosiane Irakoze is his third minor victim in just two years. The first and second victims were also schoolgirls and became the perpetrator's wives after negotiations. Despite the silence and cover-up from local authorities and the victims' parents, Silas Bayiramye, director of ECOFO in Rutabo, calls on Mabayi native intellectuals and children's rights defenders to mobilize and demand that the perpetrator be punished.

#### **Two women beaten in Muruta commune, Kayanza province**

Information received by Ligue Iteka dated May 10, 2025, indicates that on May 2, 2025, Merankabandi project gave money to vulnerable women in Kavoga hill, Muruta commune, Kayanza province. On the same date, two women were beaten by their husbands. According to eyewitnesses, Nshimirimana Odette came home around 8 p.m., drunk, and began insulting her husband, Bigirindavyi Thomas, telling him he was worthless and a dog. Thomas, angry, beat his wife. According to the same eyewitnesses, Mukeshimana Odila did the same thing to her husband, Gashonyi Libère, and he also beat his wife and hit her arm. That same night, the two men were taken to Muruta commune cell by the hill authorities.

### **II.3. RIGHT TO FREEDOM**

#### **II.3.1. ARBITRARY ARRESTS AND DETENTIONS**

##### **Motorcyclists imprisoned in Mwaro provincial**

Information received by Ligue Iteka on May 10, 2025, indicates that on May 2, 2025, several motorcycle taxi drivers working in Mwaro provincial town spent days in Mwaro provincial police station cell.

According to eyewitnesses, the reason was that they had not participated in the International Labor Day parade on May 1, 2025. As usual, the order was given by the provincial governor and the provincial police commissioner in Mwaro.

According to the same eyewitnesses, they were required to pay a fine to be released. The victims

were released from the cell on May 8, 2025. Some other motorcycle taxi drivers preferred to go into hiding to avoid arrest, which affected their families' income. However, they did not have fuel on their motorcycles, which is very rare at Mwaro gas station.

##### **Two members of the Burundi Bwa Bose coalition arrested in Makamba commune and province**

On May 7, 2025, on Gasange hill in Makamba commune and province, Nzoyihaya Vincent, representative of this coalition on Gasange hill, was arrested and jailed in Makamba communal police station cell.

On the same day, Hatungimana Gaspard, leader of the coalition in Kabuye zone of the same commune, was also arrested by police officers in collaboration with Imbonerakure. According to neighbors, he narrowly escaped imprisonment but has been in hiding ever since.

### **Two members of the Sahwanya FRODEBU party arrested in Nyanza-Lac commune, Makamba province**

Information received by Ligue Iteka on May 7, 2025, indicates that on April 25, 2025, on Kabo hill, Nyanza-Lac commune, Makamba province, Nijimbere Habakuk and Rénovât, all members of Sahwanya FRODEBU party were arrested and taken by the security service to Nyanza-Lac police station cell for two days. They were accused of being active in Sahwanya FRODEBU opposition political party. The reason for their arrest was for wanting to organize an election campaign before the CENI's regulatory deadline.

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

### **III.1. RIGHT TO HEALTH**

#### **Medication shortage in Mutaho commune, Gitega province**

For the past two weeks, all health centers in Mutaho health district, Gitega province, have been experiencing a worrying shortage of medication. Patients attending health centers no longer receive medication. At Mutaho district hospital, as in all bordering centers, the medication stocks are empty.

According to several testimonies collected, medical staff can only consult patients and refer them to private pharmacies to purchase prescribed medica-

tions. According to a patient interviewed at Bugendana health center, he does not know why the administration is urging the population to purchase Medical Assistance Cards, as it is a way to fill the coffers. The Bugendana health center is particularly affected because not only are medications are scarce, but also the laboratory technician recently left his position to seek a better life in Dubai. Consequently, laboratory tests have not been done for three weeks. It should be noted that the Mutaho Health District has recorded four deserted nurses since early this year.

## **IV. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Ligue Iteka will continue to strongly denounce the persistent deterioration of human rights in Burundi and condemn the impunity of perpetrators of crimes. It calls on the Burundian authorities to take all necessary measures and recommends the following:

### **To the Government of Burundi:**

- ⇒ Prohibit intimidation activities by Imbonerakure, especially during this crucial period in the country's political life;
- ⇒ Guarantee the protection of fundamental rights and end violence committed by Imbonerakure;
- ⇒ Conduct thorough, impartial, and transparent investigations into reported cases of arbitrary arrests, abductions, violence, and murders. Those responsible must be brought to justice in accordance with the law.

## **To the CENI**

- ⇒ The Independent National Electoral Commission must ensure strict enforcement of the electoral code, particularly Article 40, and guarantee fair representation of all stakeholders in voting processes.