



HUMAN RIGHTS “in Burundi”

Everyone should be respected

JUNE 2020-JUNE 2025

***A TUMULTUOUS FIVE-YEAR TERM UNDER GENERAL
EVARISTE NDAYISHIMIYE***

July 2025

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AGNU: United Nations General Assembly

BRB: Bank of the Republic of Burundi.

CDP: Council of Patriots

CECI: Independent Communal Electoral Commission

CENI: Independent National Electoral Commission

CEPI: Independent Provincial Electoral Commission

CNDD-FDD: National Council for the Defense of Democracy - Defense Forces

CNL: National Congress for Freedom
DESC: Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights

DESC: Socio-Economic and Cultural Rights

ECOFO: Fundamental School

FRODEBU: Front for Democracy in Burundi

OPJ: Judicial Police Officer

PNB: National Police of Burundi

DRC: Democratic Republic of the Congo
SNR: National Intelligence Service

SNR: National Inquiry Service

TGI: High Court

UPRONA: Union for National Progress

VB: Polling Station

VBG: Gender-Based Violence

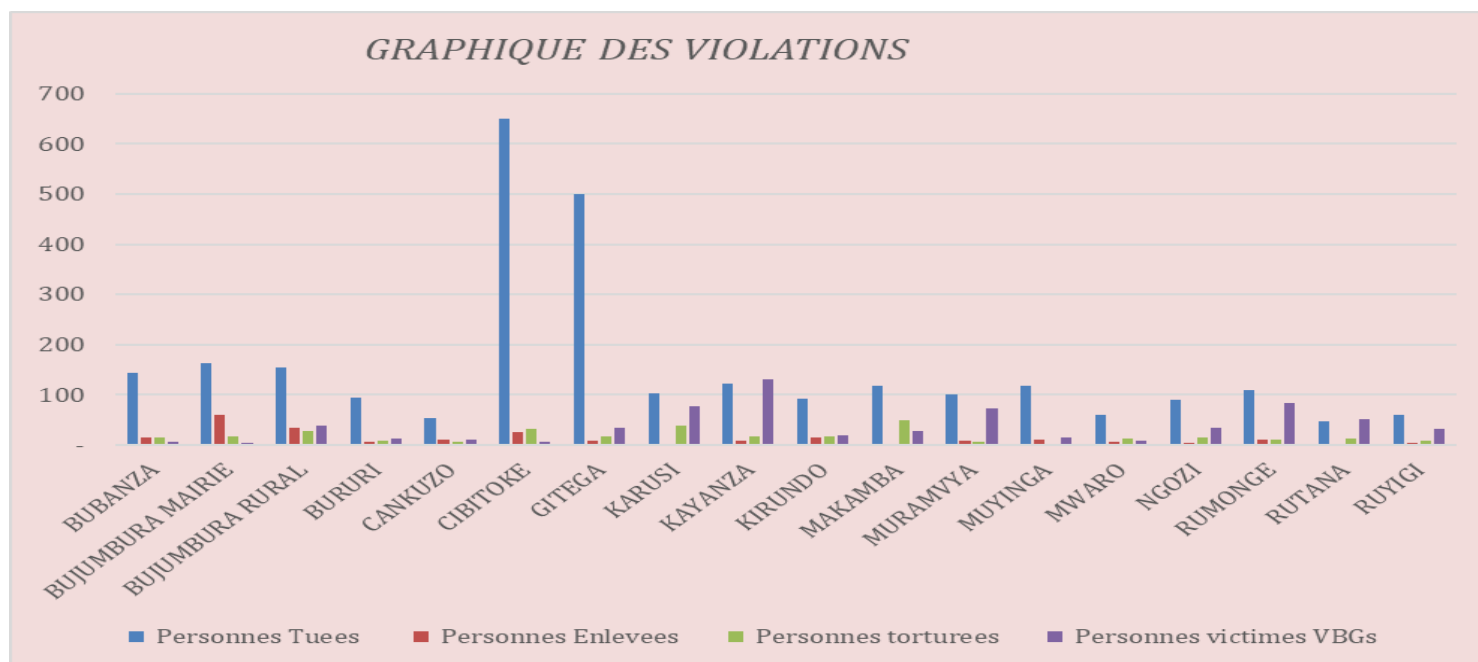
I. 1. *EXECUTIVE SUMMARY*

The troubling and critical situation of human rights in Burundi under President Evariste Ndayishimiye highlights an alarming reality, arising from a complex socio-political landscape that influences the current priorities and dynamics of the country. After a long period of civil conflicts generated under the administration of his predecessor in 2015, Ndayishimiye's arrival in the presidency in June 2020 raised hopes for potential positive changes in national governance.

The Iteka League, which produces this analytical report through its weekly news, has closely monitored this political alternation, nurturing hope for a time when civil liberties would be improved and there would be a real commitment to the protection of individual rights. Nevertheless, a more concrete assessment of the situation reveals that, despite some early signs of pro-reform discourse at the beginning of his term, major obstacles remain deeply rooted in the institutional structure of the Burundian state, starting with the failure to respect quotas. This shortcoming has definitively questioned 'the typically consociational power-sharing system, inherited from the Arusha Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Burundi, signed in 2000, which has been violated since the illegal third term of the late Pierre Nkurunziza in 2015.

Inside this issue also lies the unsustainable legacy of repression experienced in the past, particularly after the troubled political climate under the presidency of Pierre Nkurunziza. Systematic violations of human rights, such as extrajudicial executions, abductions and forced disappearances, Gender-Based Violence (GBV), torture, as well as arbitrary arrests and detentions, in addition to the fierce repression of both internal and external political dissent, have shaped a culture of fear and mistrust that permeates all levels of society. While Ndayishimiye initially sought to govern with promises of political openness, his administration's attitude toward human rights progressively revealed a dual approach: on one hand, a sincere acknowledgment of historical injustices, and on the other hand, a persistent will to control dissenting or critical voices through coercive and conciliatory means.

The human rights situation in Burundi under his mandate deeply reflects the complexities of a hard-fought struggle against historical complainings while juggling the imperative to establish a certain stability amidst permanent sociopolitical tensions of 'locking down civic space and repression,' as evidenced by illustrative facts of observed violations: 2776 people are killed, 231 people are abducted, 313 people are tortured, 665 cases of gender-based violence victims.



Under the presidency of Evariste Ndayishimiye, Burundi is experiencing a deterioration of socio-economic rights and exacerbated poor governance, leading to a glaring shortage of essential goods, such as fuel, medicine, agricultural inputs, and other imported products or those made from imported products. Access to education in rural areas is limited by inadequate infrastructure and a lack of resources, while the training of qualified professionals also suffers from a lack of funding. In the health sector, shortages of medicine and dilapidated infrastructure jeopardize the quality of care, increasing health inequalities, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, which reveals the vulnerability of the most disadvantaged. Unemployment, particularly high among young people, is compounded by precarious conditions and the absence of employment policies. A large part of the population lives below the poverty line, facing housing insecurity and limited access to clean water. The poor governance characterizing government policies exacerbates these violations in a fragile institutional situation. As a result, the 2025 elections were widely controversial following a series of restrictive measures such as the exclusion of the opposition and acts of intimidation against actual or presumed opponents.

The potential frauds reported by the opposition and the violence against observers have exacerbated tensions, leading to the results of the legislative elections on June 5, 2025, to be strongly contested by the opposition, as the CNDD-FDD claims to have obtained 96.51% of the votes, which intensifies the resistance against this system perceived as authoritarian. This report first examines the political-security context, the socio-economic and judicial context, as well as governance, while highlighting key facts related to the human rights situation. After a comparative analysis of the two successive terms of the late Nkurunziza and Ndayishimiye, it then addresses the allegations of human rights violations, taking into account civil and political rights as well as socio-economic and cultural rights.

I.2. RECOMMENDATIONS :

To the Government of Burundi:

1. End intimidation tactics, arbitrary detention, and repression of dissent to create an atmosphere of security and trust.
2. Strengthen the independence of the judiciary and ensure its impartiality to protect human rights and provide justice for victims of violations.
3. Avoid restrictions on freedom of expression and ensure the protection of journalists, human rights defenders, and opposition members.
4. Organize an inclusive and representative national dialogue to address fundamental issues and find sustainable solutions.
5. Establish effective accountability mechanisms to investigate human rights violations and hold perpetrators of these violations criminally accountable.
6. Promote genuine and inclusive national reconciliation based on truth, justice, and accountability.
7. Strengthen international cooperation to support reform efforts and the protection of human rights in Burundi.

To Burundi's partners:

1. Support the efforts of civil society organizations advocating for democracy and fighting against impunity;
2. Use your influence to encourage Burundian authorities to respect human rights, end impunity, and create frameworks for dialogue with their stakeholders.

To human rights organizations:

1. Continue monitoring the human rights situation in Burundi, continue the fight for fundamental rights, and advocate for peace and democracy;
2. Provide support to victims of human rights violations and work to ensure their access to justice.

1.3. METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

The Iteka League regularly disseminates weekly bulletins titled Iteka n'Ijambo, as well as monthly, quarterly, and annual reports on the situation of human rights and security. These documents are shared with various partners, particularly with the Government of Burundi and its different institutions. This report stems from an observation conducted by volunteers of the Iteka League, who work for human rights through 17 provincial federations and 32 sections. The members of this organization are guided by principles of ethics and humanitarianism, committing to prevent human rights violations while continuing to monitor and document the abuses and violence perpetrated by the ruling power against its population. The research methodology adopted to analyze the human rights situation in Burundi under the regime of Ndayishimiye Evariste is based on several complementary and rigorous approaches.

A qualitative approach has been favored, which includes the collection and processing of information as well as interviews with key stakeholders, such as human rights defenders, members of civil society, and government representatives. This method allows for the gathering of diverse viewpoints on the human rights situation in Burundi, thus providing a nuanced view of the challenges faced and the progress made since Ndayishimiye came to power in 2020. Furthermore, interviews were conducted with victims of human rights violations in order to collect direct testimonies, thereby enriching the analysis by grounding the data in lived experience.

However, through its weekly bulletin Iteka n' ijambo, this report compiles data covering five years of governance, encompassing bulletin number 219, published on June 20, 2020, up to bulletin 480 of June 29, 2025.

2. <https://lique-iteka.bi/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Bulletin-ITEKA-N-IJAMBO-219.pdf>
3. <https://lique-iteka.bi/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Bulletin-ITEKA-N-IJAMBO-220.pdf>
4. <https://lique-iteka.bi/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/Bulletin-ITEKA-N-IJAMBO-479.pdf>

IInd PART:: CONTEXT FOR THE REPORT PERIOD

II.1. POLITICAL CONTEXT

The political landscape of Burundi, where President Ndayishimiye reigns, is marked by significant tensions. These arise from a manifest desire to strengthen power, control public freedoms, and combat corruption. Since his arrival in office, Ndayishimiye has undertaken a series of reforms. However, he must navigate an environment where the opposition is often sidelined and faced with repression. Freedom of expression, already precarious, continues to be severely threatened. Indeed, the restriction of media space, coupled with repressive practices against dissenting voices, creates a tense political climate that hinders the diversity of opinions and citizen participation.

At the same time, the manipulation of institutions and the concentration of powers raise serious concerns. Governance in Burundi is therefore revealed to be vulnerable, heightened by security worries related to social protest movements. These are often stifled by the fear of repression, while economic issues such as unemployment and social inequalities are exacerbated by favoritism and poor resource distribution. In this context, Ndayishimiye faces a significant challenge: to regain the trust of citizens and to promote respect for human rights, while managing the legacy of a complex history.

Since its rise to power, the Burundian government has implemented strict control measures to limit any form of dissent. Arbitrary arrests, often carried out under the pretext of accusations of destabilization or undermining the state's internal security, have multiplied, affecting both political figures and members of civil society. Trials before non-independent courts, perceived as biased, serve as an alibi to silence opposing voices, thus contributing to the creation of an atmosphere of fear and intimidation.

Moreover, the restrictions on freedom of expression and assembly have been tightened, as evidenced by media censorship and the limitations imposed on public demonstrations. Authorities are also intensifying their control of social media, seeking to control and arrest anyone who criticizes the government, leading to the arrest and imprisonment of journalists, such as Floriane Irangabiye and Sandra Muhoza. This systematic control of civil society facilitates the crushing of any organized dissent, thereby consolidating an authoritarian regime. Despite hopes for change, Ndayishimiye has continued the policies of his predecessor, especially in the areas of security and international relations.

Under his mandate, Burundi continued to face security challenges, including attacks from armed groups and tensions with neighbors, involving Rwanda with incitement to aggression, unlike the DRC where Ndayishimiye becomes an ally involved in that country's internal war against the AFC/M23 rebel revolutionary movement. The repression of the opposition exceeds national borders, exerting pressure on leaders of political parties abroad and exiled civil society, with the aim of eliminating any critical and dissenting voice. In response to these actions, international pressures have multiplied, but little progress has been made to ease the political tension.

5. https://ligue-iteka.bi/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/DECLARATION_ATTACHE_GROUPE_DE_PRESSE_IWACU.pdf

6. <https://ligue-iteka.bi/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/ATTAQUE-A-BURINGA-25-2-2024.pdf>

II.1. POLITICAL CONTEXT (the following of page 8)

The regime's strategy thus appears to be focused on strengthening power at the expense of political pluralism and civil liberties, establishing the foundations of a system where dissent is completely controlled and where any real or perceived opposition must operate under the threat of systematic repression, which includes suspending or ousting some political leaders from their party presidency, including the CNL party of Agathon Rwasa, whose case is currently in the judicial system experiencing excessive delays in processing. Furthermore, Ndayishimiye's regime has perpetuated the constitutional amendments introduced under Nkurunziza, consolidating presidential prerogatives and extending the length of mandates.

The authoritarian drift of Evariste Ndayishimiye's power has also manifested itself during the legislative and communal elections of 2025. The preparations for these elections revealed a worrying picture, where opposition parties were sidelined through a restrictive electoral code and forced contributions. Opposition members faced intimidation and threats, impacting the credibility of the electoral process.

Thus, as the June 5, 2025 election approaches, secret meetings of local leaders have been reported to plan orchestrated frauds, including maneuvers such as ballot stuffing in favor of the CNDD-FDD. During the June 5 election, irregularities marked the proceedings, including polling stations opening before the designated time and voters casting their ballots many times. The presence of observers, including those from the Catholic Church, has often been compromised, with violence being commonplace.

Political agents who refused to sign minutes drafted elsewhere and intimidated opposition militants illustrated a climate of terror, marginalizing the opposition. The counting process was also manipulated, where representatives of the opposition were again sidelined or threatened. The preliminary results from the National Independent Electoral Commission (CENI), presented on June 5, 2025, allowed little room for doubt, with the CNDD-FDD announcing 5.5 million votes, or 96.51% of the ballots, while other parties, such as UPRONA and CNL, appeared irrevocably excluded from the game.

The composition of the National Assembly, now dominated by 100 deputies from the CNDD-FDD, reveals a troubling reality where other parties have not succeeded in crossing the 2% threshold necessary for their representation. The proclamation of an Assembly exclusively composed of CNDD-FDD is not only considered an affront to democratic principles but also acts as a catalyst for strong resistance from opponents of UPRONA, CNL, and the Burundi bwa Bose coalition, who challenge the legitimacy of this election, thus refusing to submit to a system they perceive as authoritarian.

7. <https://ligue-iteka.bi/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/LES-DROITS-DE-L-OPPOSITION-ENTRAVES.pdf>

8. <https://ligue-iteka.bi/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/Bulletin-ITEKA-N-IJAMBO-477.pdf>

9. <https://ligue-iteka.bi/index.php/2025/06/18/bulletin-hebdomadaire-iteka-nijambo-n478/>



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II. 2. SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT

Under the presidency of Evariste Ndayishimiye, Burundi is going through a dark period, where violations of socio-economic rights are becoming increasingly blatant. The situation of the populations is deteriorating sharply, particularly in the education sector. In rural areas, access to school is a luxury, hindered by failing infrastructure and a glaring lack of educational resources. Financing issues add to these challenges, making the education system unable of training a skilled workforce.

On the health side, the reality is equally troubling. The shortage of medications and underfunding, combined with crumbling infrastructure, have led to a drastic decline in the quality of care. Health inequalities are widening, and the crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated this vulnerability, affecting particularly the most disadvantaged populations.

The labor market, for its part, is marked by an alarming unemployment rate, especially among young people, who struggle to find decent jobs. Working conditions remain precarious, and no effective strategy has been implemented to stimulate job creation or support the private sector. A significant portion of the population lives below the poverty line, facing serious issues such as housing insecurity, food insecurity, and limited access to clean water. Government policies, often ill-suited to the actual socio-economic needs of the country, contribute to perpetuating these violations. The fragile institutional structure and lack of commitment to uphold national and international standards exacerbate this situation. This cycle of vulnerability endangers human development and social stability in Burundi, highlighting the need for a thorough analysis of the root causes and possible solutions.



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II.3. GOVERNANCE CONTEXT

Under the regime of Evariste Ndayishimiye, the governance framework in Burundi has undergone notable transformations, marked by key events. Under Article 3 of the organic law

N° 1/05 of March 16, 2023, which defines the criteria for determining and delimiting administrative subdivisions, the country has undertaken significant reforms in its administrative divisions. This legal framework has led to a redefinition of the territory, now structured into five provinces, 42 communes, 451 zones, and 3044 hills and neighborhoods. Article 7 of this same law preserves existing institutions until elections are held, while Article 4 reduces the number of provinces from 18 to five: Buhumuza, Bujumbura, Burunga, Butanyerera, and Gitega.

During the period of this report, although a quota system was established by the Arusha Accords of 2000 to ensure fair representation of ethnicities in public institutions, with a distribution of 60% for Hutu and 40% for Tutsi, some challenges persist. A survey conducted by the Iteka League between 2021 and 2023 highlighted gaps in the 2021 data. Even though some political positions show a limited ethnic gap, the dominance of the CNDD-FDD party within public institutions is clear, especially with positions such as the presidency and the National Inquiry Service (SNR) showing a 100% membership rate to this party.

With decree number 100/063 of September 22, 2020, revising decree number 100/141 of August 25 concerning the reorganization of the services of the presidency of the Republic of Burundi, Evariste Ndayishimiye placed the Bank of the Republic of Burundi "BRB" under specialized administration under his supervision within less than 100 days of taking power, stripping this major institution of economic security of its independence. Since then, the decisions of the BRB have become more political than economic, especially with the change of the 5000 and 10000 banknotes, the management of which during the transition has left the population distrustful of the country's economic system, and the opaque management of exchange offices which has resulted in a manhunt for currency traders and the operators of exchange offices.

Alongside these political developments, the country is facing economic troubles, marked by the devaluation of the Burundian currency and a lack of foreign currency. This situation has caused shortages of essential products such as fuel, medicine, and chemical fertilizers, leading to the dismissal of the Director General of the Central Bank of Burundi. In this worrying context, questions about the country's economic future have arisen, leaving the population perplexed. The Bank of the Republic of Burundi (BRB) revealed alarming data on inflation, which reached, according to Macrotrends and Focus Economics data, an annual inflation rate of about 26.9% to 26.94% for 2023, and was estimated at about 20.2% to 20.21% for 2024. The African Development Bank indicates that inflation rose from 18.8% in 2022 to 27.1% in 2023. mainly due to the rise in food prices resulting from weak agricultural production and the depreciation of the Burundian franc against the US dollar. These figures call for heightened vigilance, as indicated by Faustin Ndikumana, national director of Parcem, who warns that an inflation rate above 10% is concerning, and that a rate close to 30% could have detrimental consequences.



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II.3. GOUVERNANCE CONTEXT(the following of page 11)

According to economic difficulties, President Evariste Ndayishimiye has decided to withdraw the 5,000 FBu and 10,000 FBu banknotes issued in July 2018, replacing them with new banknotes. This measure comes after a significant increase in fiat currency in the informal economy, exacerbating financial instability and leading to shortages in banks and shops. Despite the optimism expressed by some political leaders regarding the economic situation, the daily reality for Burundians is different: food prices are skyrocketing and fuel supply difficulties persist, leading to long queues at gas stations, which has become a common situation, thus creating an atmosphere of uncertainty for a large part of the population.

II.4. HUMAN RIGHTS CONTEXT

The context of human rights in Burundi during the administration of NDAYISHIMIYE Evariste has been the scene of a significant upheaval in the field of human rights, triggered by the renewal of members of the National Independent Human Rights Commission (CNIDH). This development has raised serious concerns among human rights organizations, which see it as a maneuver orchestrated by the regime to tighten its grip on institutions that are supposed to be independent, to the detriment of the very integrity of the CNIDH and the fundamental rights of Burundians.

May 2025 marked a turning point with the arrival of new commissioners, following the exile of the former president of the CNIDH. On May 8, 2025, a presidential decree was published, officializing the appointments of the members of this commission after a plenary session of the National Assembly held on May 5. At the head of this new team, Monsignor Martin Blaise Nyaboho, an Anglican bishop and Hutu, was appointed president, while Gérard Bigemintwaza took on the role of vice-president and Béatrice Nkurunziza that of secretary. The process had prompted the expression of 114 candidacies for only 7 positions, thereby allowing the formation of a team considered ethnically balanced. However, voices were raised to criticize the lack of diversity of opinions regarding human rights within this new configuration. This renewal took place in a context of legislative changes affecting law no. 1/04 of January 5, 2011 which governs the CNIDH, which raised questions about the legitimacy of the new appointments. An atmosphere of distrust hung over, fueled by allegations of mismanagement surrounding the former commission. In response to these accusations of dysfunction, Gélase Ndabirabe, the president of the National Assembly, decided to replace the members of the CNIDH. The appointment of Monsignor Nyaboho, in particular, sparked controversies, fueled by concerns about his ability to defend the independence of the CNIDH, highlighting significant dysfunctions that the president of the Assembly deemed a priority to correct.

Founded in 2011, the CNIDH played a vital role in defending civil rights in Burundi. In mid-March 2025, commissioners criticized the management of the CNIDH, calling for the resignation of the president and advocating for a financial audit to enhance transparency. In response to these concerns, a statement from the National Assembly issued a call for applications for new commissioners, citing the need to investigate structural issues within the CNIDH, in accordance with current legislation.

II.4. HUMAN RIGHTS CONTEXT (the following of page 12)

The ITEKA League has expressed its reservations regarding the threats facing the CNIDH, particularly those emanating from the president of the Assembly, who had considered amending law No. 1/04, a move deemed dangerous for the independence of the commission. In response to this situation, Sixte Vigny Nimuraba, the former president of the CNIDH, decided to leave the country. Although allegations of mismanagement have been made against him through the media, the ITEKA League also reported instances of intimidation targeting him, such as the suspension of security measures and illegal searches. The vague circumstances surrounding his departure have also raised questions, as President Evariste Ndayishimiye stated that he was actually just traveling, while credible sources contest this claim, indicating that no official departure had been recorded anywhere.

During this period, Burundi was elected to the United Nations Human Rights Council for the term 2024-2026, with a score of 168 votes out of 192, which seems paradoxical given the concerns about the human rights situation in the country. Burundi opposed the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in Burundi, appointed by the Human Rights Council through its resolution 48/16, on October 13, 2021, at the end of the mandate of the Commission of Inquiry on Burundi. Since then, the Government of Burundi has continuously rejected the reports of the UN Special Rapporteur as well as those from Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) during evaluation sessions. This situation raises questions about Burundi's credibility and commitment to respect and promote human rights. The United Nations Human Rights Council is tasked with promoting and protecting human rights around the world, and the election of a country that does not seem to honor its human rights obligations can be considered problematic.



12. <https://x.com/NtahirajaThren1/status/1711790227121926512>

13. https://ishr.ch/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/A_HRC_51_44_AdvanceEditedVersion.pdf

II.5. SECURITY CONTEXT

The official militarization of the youth of the ruling party, known by the acronym FRAD (Force for Reserve and Support for National Development), as well as the establishment of the Special Operations Unit (UOS), two recent initiatives, have led to a revision of the organic law N°1/04 of February 20, 2017, concerning the mission, organization, training, and conditions of service of the National Defense Force of Burundi. This revision was unanimously approved by the deputies present during the plenary session on April 11, 2022. The government envoy announced that the planned paramilitary training will begin as soon as the legal regulations, including the decree governing the FRAD and the operating budget, are in place. The aim of this training is to instill a patriotic spirit in Burundian youth, who would be called upon to contribute to the development of national defense. However, it was specified that they would not be compensated, being regarded as interns. As a result of the ongoing analysis of the organic bill, it has been suggested that clarifications be introduced in the implementing texts.

Another alarming aspect is the involvement of the Burundian army in the Congolese conflict in the East of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). According to testimonies relayed by social networks, since November 2023, Burundian soldiers have been engaged in combat in the East of the DRC, where human losses have been reported. This situation has raised concerns within the Iteka League regarding the future of security in Burundi. It should be noted that many of the attacks affecting Burundi often originate in the DRC, where rebel groups are nurtured.

The discovery of corpses has intensified in a disturbing way since Evariste Ndayishimiye came to power on June 18, 2020, following the elections of May of the same year, until the end of November 2023. 2,291 people were killed, of whom 247 were killed by agents of the government, 1,188 by unidentified people, most of whom were buried under the orders of state agents without any investigation, and 176 during armed attacks¹⁵. In such a context, political dialogue remains blocked following the adoption of a tailor-made Constitution, as well as the adoption of laws that go against respect for human rights, particularly in the areas of freedom of expression, assembly and association, such as the law governing non-profit organisations and NGOs, and Organic Law No. 1/04 of 2017. This legislation also appears to justify abuses by the Imbonerakure militia .

Moreover, armed movements such as FOREBU, RED TABARA, FPB, and FNL, perceived by the government as allies of former FAB, are cited as targets of attacks, forced disappearances, assassinations, arrests, and arbitrary detentions. A widespread desertion is occurring within these security forces, while crime is on the rise.

An alarming phenomenon is also taking place in the province of Cibitoke, where rebels from Rwanda are terrorizing the population. According to a report from the Iteka League dated November 17, 2024, residents of the hills of Rutorero, Nyabungere, Gafumbegeti, Nderama, Ruhembe, and Rutyazo, all located in the Kibira forest, are under constant threat from Rwandan rebels, particularly the National Liberation Front (FLN). They demand ransoms, engage in looting, and attack the local population while moving freely with their heavy weapons.

II.5. SECURITY CONTEXT (the following of page 14)

Moreover, these rebels would benefit from tacit support from some civil and military authorities of the ruling party, the CNDD-FDD.

In the same line of ideas, information coming from the affected areas highlights armed conflicts in the Kibira forest, where clashes between Burundian soldiers and insurgents are regularly reported, placing the inhabitants at the heart of this violence. Young people and heads of families are often mobilized to supply the soldiers, leaving their families in a precarious situation. Overall, this dynamic of violence and insecurity raises pressing questions about the safety and well-being of the civilian population in the Cibitoke area.



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14. <https://assemblee.bi/2022/04/12/analyse-et-adoption-du-projet-de-loi-organique-portant-modification-de-la-loi-organique -n1-04 -20-04-2017-portant-mission-organisation-instructions-conditions-des-services-et-fonctionnement-de/>

15. <https://ligue-iteka.bi/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/RAPPORT-ANALYTIQUE-SUR-LES-CORPS-SANS-VIE-RETROUVES.pdf>

II.6. JUDICIAL CONTEXT

The regime of Evariste Ndayishimiye in Burundi is characterized by a judicial context marked by a series of significant events. On November 6, 2023, the trial of Alain-Guillaume Bunyoni, former Prime Minister, opened before the Supreme Court, which was held exceptionally at the Gitega prison, where he has been detained since July 2023. He is being prosecuted for endangering the internal security of the State, conspiring to overturn the constitutional order, contempt towards the head of State and institutions, as well as offenses against the national economy. At the end of the hearings, the public prosecutor requested a life sentence for Bunyoni, accompanied by a colossal fine of seven million one hundred thousand FBU, as well as double the value of properties and vehicles considered to be ill-gotten gains. His co-defendants, including Désiré Uwamahoro and Samuel Destin Mfumukeko, are facing a request for a thirty-year prison sentence.

At the same time, a group of lawyers, mandated by civil society, filed a complaint with the East African Community (EAC) Court of Justice to rule on the contested third term of the late Pierre Nkurunziza.

After being dismissed at first instance in 2016, seven years later, when Burundi seemed to have definitively turned the page on this still controversial third term, these lawyers discovered that a favorable ruling had been made by the EAC appellate chamber, declaring the third term of the late President Pierre Nkurunziza illegal. This ruling, made on November 25, 2021, in Bujumbura, had not been published immediately, thus remaining unknown until recently. During his research, one of the lawyers, Me Dieudonné Bashirahishize, became aware of it. The ruling clearly states that the Constitutional Court of Burundi violated the Constitution as well as the Arusha peace agreement. However, on social media, members of the CNDD-FDD, the ruling party, dismiss this decision, labeling it as "too late" and questioning its usefulness. The issue of implementing this ruling also raises questions among the appellate judges, who point out the complexity of its enforcement in a now different institutional framework. In contrast, Mr. Bashirahishize considers this decision a historic turning point, promising favorable consequences for the victims of the third term.

At the same time, Burundi has taken an official step with the United Nations to request recognition of the genocide perpetrated against the Hutu in 1972, an initiative led by Zéphyrin Maniratanga, Burundi's ambassador to the UN, during a debate on human rights held on October 10, 2024.

On 25 June 2025, a side event entitled "The 1972 genocide against the Hutus of Burundi: from memory to action under the responsibility to protect" was organized at the United Nations Headquarters at the initiative of Zéphyrin Maniratanga and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in Burundi. This gesture is part of an earlier recognition by the Burundian Parliament, which validated this genocide based on the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). Estimates suggest between 100,000 and 300,000 victims, accompanied by about one million refugees in neighbouring countries. Having been informed of the preparations for the event, about twenty organizations of Burundian civil society, including the Ligue Iteka, launched an Urgent Appeal to the United Nations on June 23, 2025, for a fair approach to the memory of the genocide and crimes against humanity committed in Burundi.

II.6. JUDICIAL CONTEXT (the following of page 16)

They expressed ethical and legal concerns regarding the qualification of genocide for the events of 1972 in Burundi, given that no international body has yet recognized them as such according to international law.

These organizations highlight the instrumentalization of memory by political actors, particularly the ruling party, which uses the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to divide rather than unite the memory of the victims of Burundian tragedies.

Finally, they emphasized that this parallel event obscures other episodes of serious violence that have affected Burundi, such as those of 1965, 1988, 1993, and 2015, which risks undermining national reconciliation efforts.



Anyone should be respected

IIIrd PART: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION UNDER THE SUCCESSIVE REGIMES OF PIERRE NKURUNZIZA AND NDAYISHIMIYE EVARISTE

The comparative analysis of human rights in Burundi, under the successive governments of Pierre Nkurunziza and Evariste Ndayishimiye, highlights alarming similarities regarding violations of fundamental rights and the repression of political opponents.

III.1. SERIOUS VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS UNDER THE REGIME OF THE LATE PIERRE NKURUNZIZA FROM 2015 TO 2020

Before Ndayishimiye's accession to the presidency in June 2020, the deterioration of the human rights situation was marked by an uncompromising crackdown on the opposition, serious violations of fundamental human rights, and an omnipresent climate of fear. This outbreak of violence erupted in 2015 when Nkurunziza announced that he would run for a third illegal term, provoking massive protests that were violently suppressed. This repression particularly targeted political opponents of the opposition, internal dissenters within the CNDD-FDD, youths deemed as opposition, journalists, and members of civil society engaged in peaceful demonstrations against the extension of the presidential term.

The abuses have included summary executions, abductions, enforced disappearances, sexual and gender-based violence, arbitrary detentions, and torture of critics of the regime. Human rights organizations, such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, as well as national associations such as the Iteka League, have compiled detailed reports on these violations, highlighting severe restrictions on press freedom. Independent media were either shut down or pressured, restricting civil society's free expression. In this poisonous atmosphere, the continued intimidation of voters and members of the opposition resulted in an environment where all dissent seemed non-existent.

The assessment of Nkurunziza's five years on power, from 2015 to 2020, has proven alarming: the Iteka League documented 2245 deaths, including 1312 victims killed by unidentified individuals. Furthermore, 597 cases of abductions or disappearances were reported, with the majority of the abductions involving agents of security forces. Civil society organizations and media outlets were suspended or dissolved, while human rights defenders and journalists fell victim to abductions, arbitrary arrests, and imprisonments or were forced to flee abroad. Civil society was particularly targeted by the repression orchestrated by the Government of Pierre Nkurunziza. After the attempted coup in May 2015, independent media were vandalized, while around a hundred journalists, intimidated and threatened with death, were forced into exile.

Among those who remained, some were killed, disappeared, or imprisoned, while those who continue their work face constant harassment and severe restrictions. Independent associations remain officially banned and their management teams have been forced to leave the country, settling in neighboring states from where they continue to operate. This is the case with the Iteka League, which has been particularly targeted, notably by the disappearance of its treasurer, Marie Claudette Kwizera, who was abducted on December 10, 2015, by agents of the Burundian National Inquiry Service, and has never reappeared.

The subjugation of civil society was institutionalized by the Government of Pierre Nkurunziza through a new law adopted by the National Assembly on December 29, 2016, and promulgated on January 27, 2017, which significantly reduces the freedom of association and imposes strict control over NGOs, whether national or international. This law grants the Minister of home affairs exorbitant powers that allow him to decide, without going through the Burundian judiciary, to suspend or deregister organizations that refuse to comply with the law of power. Indeed, Pierre Nkurunziza, after serving two legal terms, opted for a third illegal term in violation of the 2005 constitution and the Arusha Agreement for peace and reconciliation in Burundi, signed in 2000, two texts that limited the number of presidential terms to two.

This has led to strong opposition from political parties and civil society, exemplified by widespread mobilizations in the country's large and small cities, including in rural areas. The government has responded with a bloody crackdown on real or perceived opponents, marked by numerous extrajudicial executions, arbitrary arrests, enforced disappearances, rape, torture and other forms of ill-treatment. The closure and destruction of independent media, as well as the banning and suspension of the activities of civil society organizations, are common responses by the authorities.

On October 11, 2016, Burundi suspended all cooperation with the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights following the publication of a UN report on the human rights situation in the country. At the same time, three UN experts responsible for this report were declared *personae non grata* in Burundian territory. On October 7, 2016, the Burundian government announced its withdrawal from the International Criminal Court (ICC) and decided to consider the members of the UN Independent Investigation on Burundi (EINUB) as *persona non grata*, while suspending its headquarters agreement with the UN Human Rights Office (OHCHR) in Burundi. On February 28, 2019, the Office was forced to close after 23 years of presence in Burundian territory, following a verbal note issued on December 5, 2018 by the Burundian government to the UN Resident Coordinator in the country.

Even foreign international organizations were not exempt from the restrictive measures of the regime in place. Thus, the Government suspended 130 NGOs for a period of three months on September 27, 2018, with the National Security Council accusing them of violating the laws governing them. This initiative was explained during a meeting with the representatives of the NGOs on October 2 following, during which the then Minister of home affairs. Patriotic Training and Local Development, Pascal Barandagiye, conditioned the reopening of these NGOs on the presentation of three documents: a cooperation agreement, a protocol for the execution of programs in accordance with the new National Development Plan, and a commitment act regarding compliance with banking regulations concerning foreign exchange and plans for correcting ethnic and gender imbalances.

Despite the persistence of the crisis that began in 2015, mainly resulting from a presidential election that violated the 2005 Constitution and the Arusha Agreement for peace and reconciliation in Burundi, which had raised hopes for better guarantees of human rights for about a decade, this situation would have worsened without the advocacy of civil society organizations and the media, including the ITEKA League.

Despite the repression they are undergoing and the difficult material and financial conditions, these groups have organized themselves to continue their documentation and denunciation activities of the human rights violations committed daily, largely by the current Government. Since the beginning of the political crisis in Burundi in April 2015, which has claimed many lives and caused the massive displacement of about 430,000 refugees to neighboring countries, a series of initiatives from technical and financial partners have been observed, aimed at encouraging conflict actors to engage in negotiations to restore peace. At the regional level, on July 6, 2015, the East African Community appointed Ugandan President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni as mediator in the Burundian crisis. To strengthen this mediation, former Tanzanian President Benjamin Mkapa was chosen as facilitator on March 2, 2016 launching an inclusive inter-Burundian political dialogue.

However, these efforts quickly faced the resolute opposition of the Burundian Government, which refused to engage in dialogue with those it accused of participating in the attempted coup of May 2015, as well as with organizations that took part in the "Stop the Third Term" movement. At the same time, a large part of the opposition rejected Pierre Nkurunziza's new mandate, deeming it illegitimate. In response, the Burundian authorities used internal dialogue to counter the initiatives of the EAC, the National Commission for Inter-Burundian Dialogue, led by Monseigneur Justin Nzoyisaba, which organized popular consultations in 2016; however, its final report, submitted to the government on August 24, 2016, was never made public. A significant portion of the opposition and independent civil society chose to abstain from it.

The five meetings held between 2017 and 2018 in Arusha, Tanzania, also failed to bring together all political actors. In any case, whether at the regional or international level, these peace initiatives did not yield the expected results due to the Burundian authorities' refusal to cooperate. During these five rounds of negotiations between the Government of Burundi and other conflicting actors, the CNDD-FDD party and its allies were notably absent, particularly during the last round of talks. Targeted sanctions were imposed against the Burundian authorities following the 2015 crisis, primarily aimed at government officials and those from the ruling party, the National Council for the Defense of Democracy - Forces for the Defense of Democracy (CNDD-FDD). These sanctions were a response to human rights violations and the brutal repression of political opponents.

The International Criminal Court (ICC) opened investigations into Burundi in October 2017, after the Preliminary Chamber gave the prosecutor the green light to examine alleged crimes on Burundian territory or by Burundian citizens between April 26, 2015 and October 26, 2017. Additionally, a United Nations commission of inquiry on Burundi was established in September 2016 to conduct specific investigations into human rights violations, producing a report in September 2017 concluding that there were reasonable grounds to believe that crimes against humanity had been committed in Burundi. Since 2016, the mandate of this commission has been renewed each year, and it continues its investigation into human rights violations in the country.

III.2. AN EXACERBATED CONTINUITY OF SERIOUS VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS UNDER THE REGIME OF GENERAL EVARISTE NDAYISHIMIYE

Under the regime of General Evariste Ndayishimiye, who took office in June 2020, the human rights situation has not seen significant improvement. Between June 2020 and June 2025, the Iteka League recorded a total of 7,250 human rights violations, including 2,776 people killed. Of this total, 1,514 bodies were found and buried without any investigation being opened. The statistics also indicate that 3,265 arbitrary arrests occurred, representing 45% of the documented violations. Gender-based violence, including sexual violence, has been reported, reflecting a hostile environment for women's rights.

Inhuman and degrading treatments, as well as abductions and enforced disappearances, persist. Law enforcement and other security authorities are frequently denounced for their brutal methods, raising serious concerns about the respect for human rights. This climate of terror and repression fuels a cycle of violence and impunity, exacerbated by the involvement of state militias, such as the Imbonerakure, who are systematically accused of harassment and intimidation towards dissidents. Socio-economic rights remain fragile in the face of external shocks, while high levels of debt would hinder the realization of ambitious development projects. At the same time, social policies have led to initiatives aimed at improving health, education, and social protection, but these suffer from insufficient funding, governance hampered by corruption, and a sometimes insecure environment.

On a social level, this situation exacerbates inequalities, particularly between rural and urban areas, and hinders access for some of the most vulnerable populations to fundamental rights. After Evariste Ndayishimiye took power in 2020, the government implemented policies aimed at promoting agriculture, a crucial sector of the Burundian economy, by supporting the modernization of agricultural practices and facilitating access to markets. Investments have also been directed toward infrastructure, particularly in road construction and electrical networks, to improve regional connectivity and encourage local economic activity. However, these initiatives are faced with low economic diversification, which heavily relies on subsistence agriculture that remains vulnerable to climate hazards and fluctuations in global prices.

The economic development policy of the regime also aims to attract foreign investments, mainly in the mining and tourism sectors, by improving the business climate and consolidating political stability. Nevertheless, the persistence of issues such as corruption, land insecurity, and political instability often hinders these efforts. Economic governance is also influenced by limitations on administrative capacity and transparency, thereby compromising the effectiveness of implemented economic policies. Economic growth remains moderate, making it imperative to strengthen economic resilience to reduce poverty rates and encourage long-term inclusive growth. In summary, the human rights situation in Burundi, under both Nkurunziza and Ndayishimiye, is characterized by a pattern of institutional violence and a blatant disregard for fundamental rights.



IVth PART : DETAILS OF ALLEGATIONS OF VIOLATIONS, INFRINGEMENTS OF HUMAN RIGHTS UNDER THE REGIME OF PRESIDENT EVARISTENDAYISHIMIYE

IV. 1. POLITICAL AND CIVIL RIGHTS

Burundi is part of the countries that adhere to the international covenant on civil and political rights adopted in New York on December 16, 1966, by the United Nations General Assembly on May 9, 1990. As part of its implementation, Burundi has taken measures in internal legislation, notably in its constitution of June 7, 2018 (Fundamental Law), in its article 19, which guarantees that all rights proclaimed and guaranteed by internationally ratified texts are an integral part of this constitution. Implementing texts have been established, notably the penal code of December 29, 2017, and the criminal procedure code of May 11, 2018, and other institutions for the protection of human rights in Burundi have been created.

IV.1.1.A SUMMARY OF DOCUMENTED HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

Under the regime of Evariste Ndayishimiye, Burundi continued to be the scene of deep-seated serious human rights violations, exacerbated by a climate of fear and repression. Among the most worrying violations, summary executions, abductions, SGBV, torture and inhuman treatment have been widely documented. The Iteka League and other human rights organizations highlight cases where detainees are subjected to physical and psychological violence, often in the context of interrogation by the security forces. Testimonies from former detainees reveal torture methods that include beatings, mock executions and starvation, underscoring a systematic pattern of intimidating political opponents and maintaining control through terror. Despite these allegations, Under the regime of Ndayishimiye Evariste, Burundi continued to be the scene of deep-seated serious human rights violations, exacerbated by a climate of fear and repression.

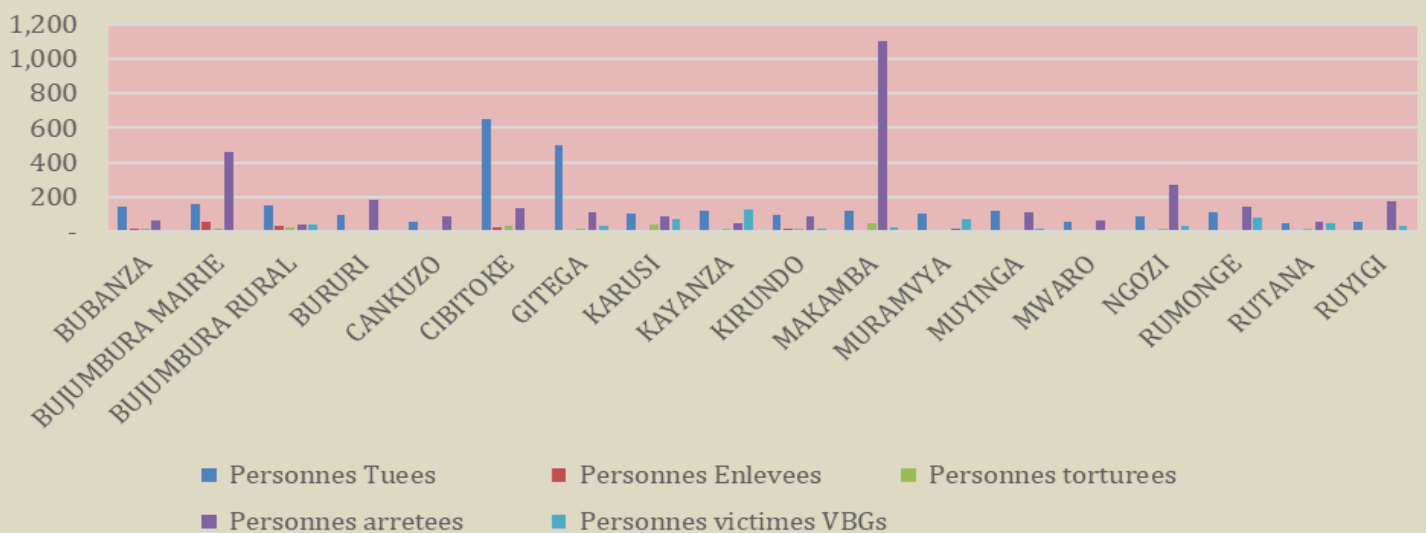
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Moreover, violence against women is manifesting alarmingly in this repressive political context. Reports indicate an increase in sexual assaults and other forms of gender-based violence, often exacerbated by the impunity enjoyed by perpetrators. Women, especially those engaged in political activities or advocacy, are particularly vulnerable to such violence, which is often used as a weapon to suppress civic engagement and deter political participation.

IV.1.1. A SUMMARY OF DOCUMENTED HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS. (the following of page 22)

The conjunction of these different types of human rights violations illustrates an alarming deterioration of the situation in Burundi, demonstrating an urgent need for increased international attention and concrete actions to protect fundamental rights in the country.

Graphique 1 : Des allégations de violations, d'atteintes et de violations des droits de l'homme du 20 juin 2020 au 29 juin 2025



The presented chart illustrates the human rights violations observed under the regime of General Evariste Ndayishimiye in Burundi, from June 20, 2020 to June 29, 2025. The organization Ligue Iteka identified and recorded a total of 7,250 allegations of violations, including 2,776 people killed (of which 1,514 were dead bodies, representing 54.5% of the murdered individuals), which accounts for 38.2% of the reported incidents. Furthermore, 231 people were kidnapped or reported missing, constituting 3.19%, and 313 individuals suffered from torture, amounting to 4.3%. In addition, the number of arbitrary arrests reached 3,265, representing 45% of the violations. During the same period, Iteka also recorded 665 cases, or 9.2%, of victims of gender-based violence, of which more than 80% were sexual violence.

In the majority of cases, the alleged perpetrators of the violations include the police and other security authorities, accused of adopting brutal methods, going as far as to extrajudicial executions, to stifle any form of dissent. These actions raise major concerns not only about respect for human rights but also regarding the long-term stability of the country. This climate of fear created, where the population hesitates to express their opinions, contributes to perpetuating a cycle of violence and impunity. Furthermore, the state-supported Imbonerakure militia, made up of youth affiliated with the ruling party, the CNDD-FDD, has played a key role in this repression. This group is denounced for carrying out campaigns of harassment and intimidation against those who oppose the current regime.



Anyone should be respected

IV. 1.1.1. RIGHT TO LIFE

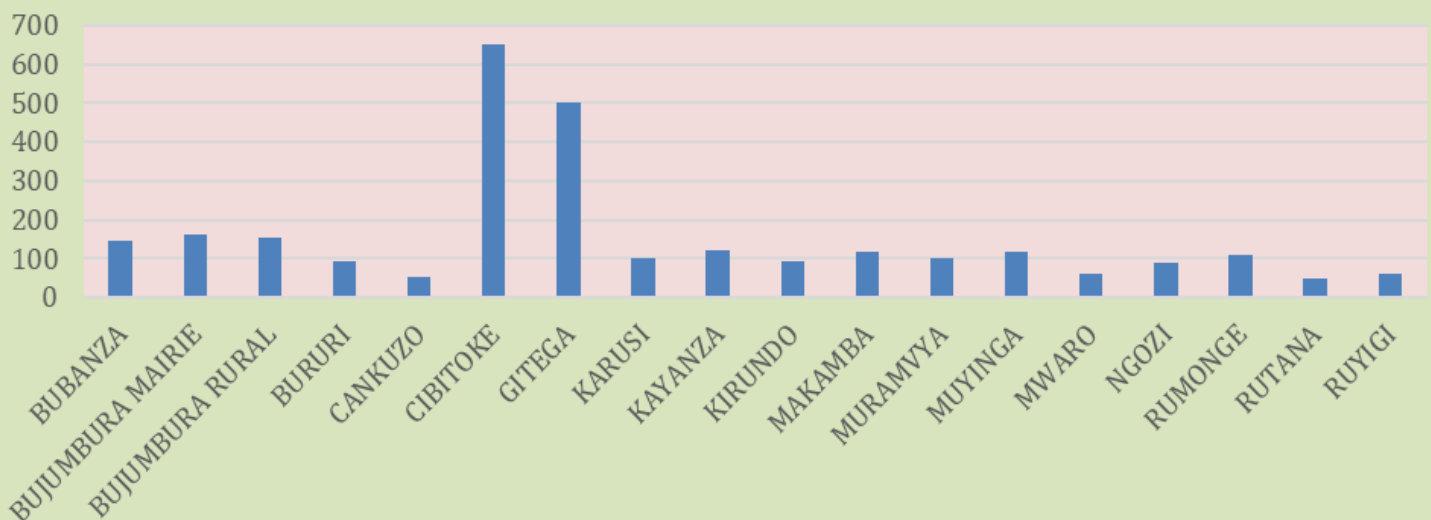
The law guarantees it, human dignity must be respected and protected by the State and in case of violation, sanctions should be applied against the presumed authors, art 21 of the constitutional law of the country.

Since President Evariste Ndayishimiye came to power in June 2020, human rights violations have persisted in Burundi. A concerning phenomenon is the frequent discovery of dead bodies, which raises alarm among many Burundians. These corpses, showing signs of crimes committed by unidentified individuals, do not seem to raise concern among the authorities in Gitega, who follow the same *modus operandi* by carrying out burials without prior investigation throughout the country.

Due to the Government's attitude towards institutions able of producing independent reports on the human rights situation, such as the UN Special Reporters on Burundi, as well as its inaction in response to requests for the reopening of civic space made by Burundian organizations based abroad, the National Independent Human Rights Commission (CNIDH) does not seem to be able to demand concrete actions, despite the alarmingly widespread nature of this phenomenon. In this context, the Iteka League puts forward the idea that this could constitute a disguised strategy by the authorities in Gitega to conceal these recurring and widespread crimes.

The denial of access to Burundian territory by the UN Special Reporters on the situation of human rights in Burundi, established by the UN Human Rights Council during its 48th session in October 2021 via resolution 48/16, has still not allowed the Burundian government to permit its holder to enter the territory for a thorough assessment of the human rights situation. Thus, the Ligue Iteka presents a worrying report on the individuals killed in various localities in Burundi, without the alleged perpetrators facing any judicial proceedings.

*GRAPHIQUE2 DES PERSONNES TUEES PENDANT LA PERIODE
DE 20 JUIN 2020 AU 29 JUIN 2025*



IV. 1.1.1. RIGHT TO LIFE (the following of page 24)

Between June 20, 2020, and June 29, 2025, under the governance of Evariste Ndayishimiye, the Iteka League documented a tragic total of 2,776 people killed by agents of state institutions (bodies: 1,514). As clearly shown in the graph above, Cibitoke province stands out with 651 homicides (lifeless bodies), representing 23.5% of the total, while Gitega province ranks second with 500 cases, or 18%. Bujumbura Mairie province, on the other hand, records a sad toll of 163 killed, which corresponds to 5.9%. The alleged perpetrators of these murderous acts include police officers, military personnel, intelligence agents, as well as administrative agents, and the Imbonerakure Youth, a group linked to the ruling party.

IV. 1.1.2. ABDUCTIONS AND/OR FORCED DISAPPEARANCES

Forced disappearances are a serious violation of human rights, particularly concerning under the regime of Evariste Ndayishimiye in Burundi. This phenomenon is marked by the abduction of individuals, often perceived as political opponents, by state agents or groups affiliated with those in power. The lack of evidence regarding the detention of these individuals, coupled with a widespread climate of fear, contributes to the impunity of the perpetrators. The Iteka League and other national and international organizations have reported an alarming increase in these cases since 2020. These disappearances are not only an affront to human dignity but also raise questions about the sociopolitical stability of the country.

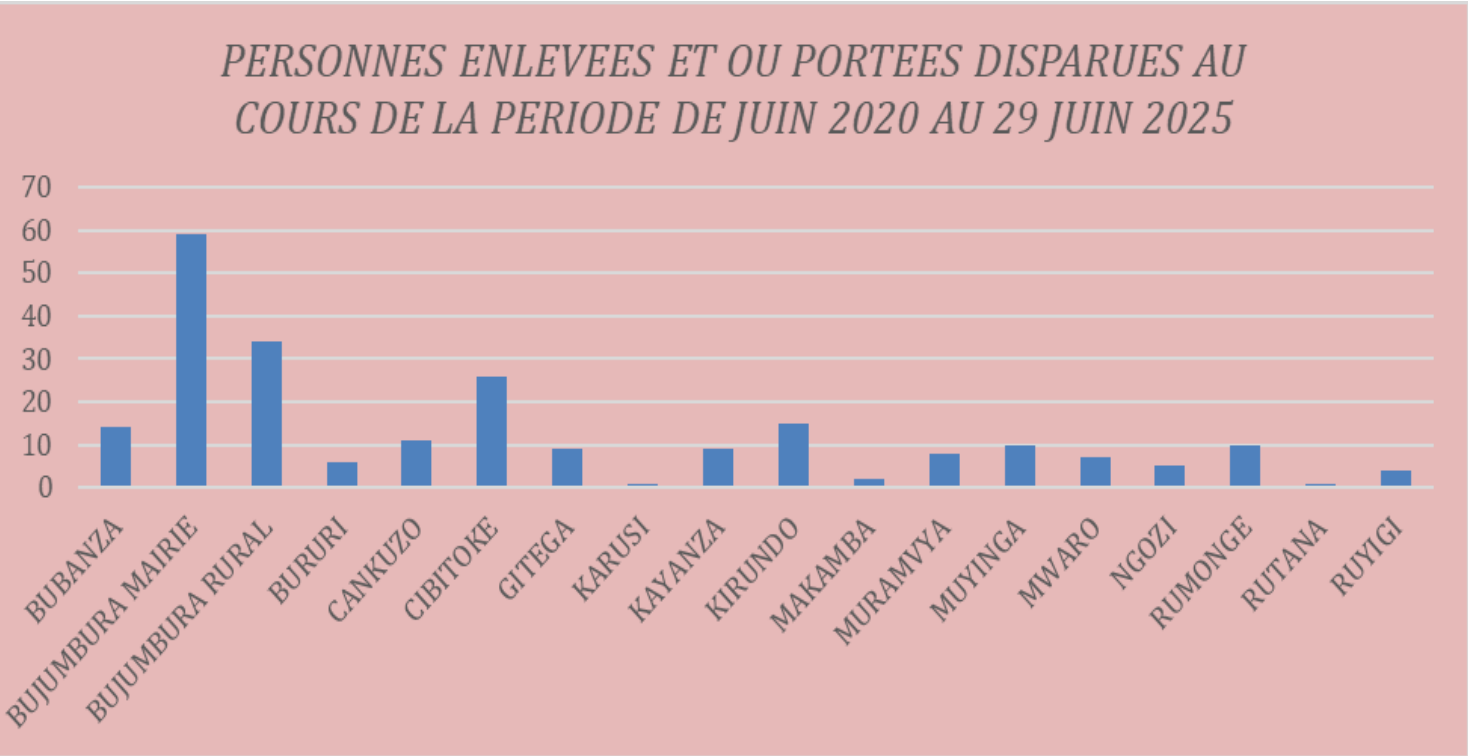
The motives behind these disappearances are often related to attempts to silence dissent and maintain control over the populace. The victims are frequently members of the opposition or perceived as such. In 2024, the Iteka League produced a detailed report showing how several people had been abducted, and in some cases, their bodies found, while others remain missing.

A joint statement from nearly all UN mechanisms alerted the President of the Republic of Burundi to the alarming situation. Furthermore, the families of missing persons often remain in a state of uncertainty and suffering, without access to justice. The authorities, both judicial and political, display reluctance to investigate these disappearances, thereby exacerbating the climate of mistrust.

"The international community has expressed condemnation, but the absence of concrete measures leading to tangible accountability suggests that these violations will continue to be a tool of repression. Deploying human rights monitoring mechanisms in Burundi is not only an urgent necessity, but could also help restore a sense of dignity for those who suffer these atrocities," declares the president of the Iteka League.

IV. 1.1.2. ABDUCTIONS AND/OR FORCED DISAPPEARANCES (the following of page 25)

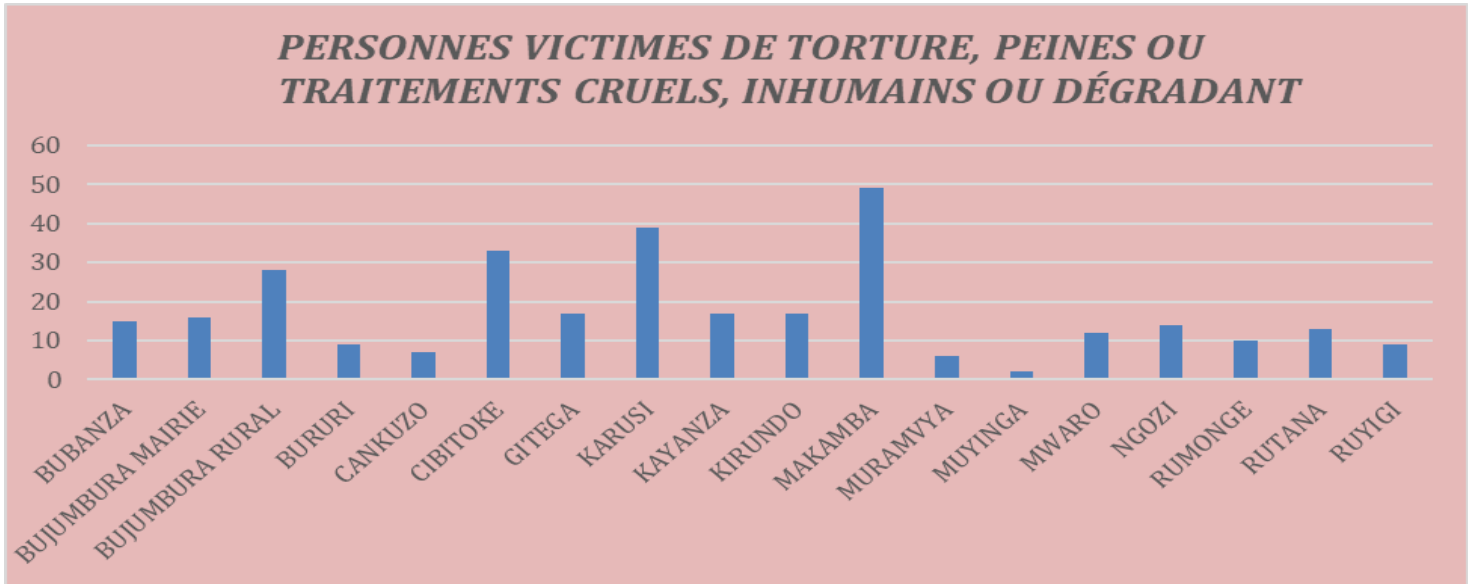
As shown in the chart below, out of a total of 231 recorded cases of disappearances by the Iteka League, the Bujumbura Mairie province accounted for 59 cases, or 25.5%, followed by Bujumbura Rural with 34 cases, or 14.7%, and finally the Cibitoke province in third place with 26 cases, or 11.3%.



IV. 1.1.3 TORTURE, CRUEL, INHUMAN OR DEGRADING PUNISHMENTS OR TREATMENTS

During the period covered by this report, Burundi has experienced a concerning deterioration in the circumstances of arrests, detention, and the treatment of individuals who are victims of arrests and prisoners, characteristic of a severely compromised human rights situation. Reports from international organizations and human rights advocacy groups convey repeated instances of torture inflicted on detainees, often during interrogations related to political accusations, particularly in the offices of the Burundian National Inquiry Service "SNR". The impact of these violations on the population is exacerbated by a climate of widespread fear that hinders efforts to denounce these abuses. The silence of the victims is often obtained through direct threats against their safety or that of their families. According to various reports available to the Iteka League, furthermore, local media are under tight control, are reluctant to relay such information for fear of reprisals, thus creating a gap between the reality experienced by Burundians and the international perception of the human rights situation in the country. Through the traumatic experience of the victims, it becomes evident that these torture practices are not just isolated incidents but are part of a broader strategy of political repression adopted within the security forces by Ndayishimiye's regime. The impunity surrounding these acts is concerning, as those responsible for these violations often remain not only unpunished but are sometimes promoted within state institutions.

“The absence of judicial prosecution of the perpetrators reinforces a vicious cycle, where the culture of violence becomes deeply entrenched in the socio-political fabric of the country. Consequently, cases of torture and inhuman treatment should not be seen as mere isolated abuses, but as manifestations of a human rights crisis that highlight the immediate need for international intervention to promote justice and restore respect for fundamental rights in Burundi,” says the Executive Director of the Iteka League.



As shown in the graph above, during this five-year period under the presidency of Ndayishimiye, the Iteka League recorded 319 cases of torture victims, primarily targeting opposition members, committed by state agents, including police, SNR agents, and Imbonerakure youth. The former province of Makamba ranks first with 49 cases, representing 15.7%, followed by the former province of Karusi with 39 cases, or 12.5%, and finally the former province of Cibitoke in third place with 33 cases, equating to 10.5%. In these situations, victims often suffer violence during their arrest or endure torture during their questions.



Anyone should be respected

IV. I.1.4. RIGHT TO FREEDOM

A. ARREST AND ARBITRARY DETENTION

During his term, President Ndayishimiye took a measure to release prisoners sentenced for minor offenses, a measure aimed at relieving overcrowded prisons and giving a second chance to detainees:

In November 2024, 477 prisoners were released from Muramvya prison. In April 2021, 3,000 prisoners were released; - In March 2021, more than 5,200 prisoners. However, these measures are often surrounded by irregularities and half-measures, which recently resulted in the arrest of some officials from the presidency and the justice sector for hindering the implementation of such decisions.

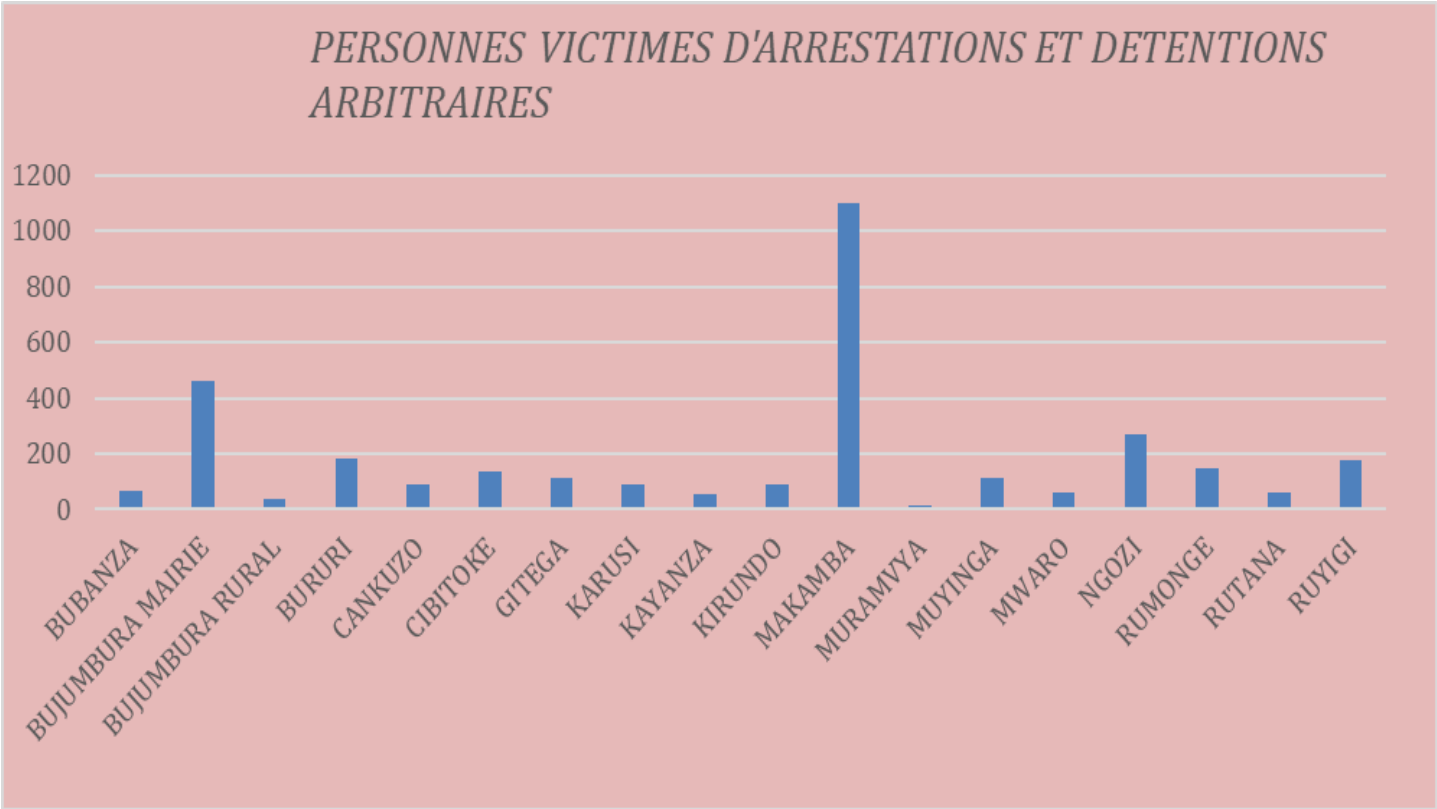
Fundamental freedoms in Burundi, such as freedom of expression, movement, and assembly, are severely hindered under the regime of Evariste Ndayishimiye despite constitutional guarantees. The frightened political environment is marked by repression, where the media faces strict control, alternating between self-censorship and sanctions for those who challenge official narratives, resulting in arrests of journalists and suspensions of broadcasts. The ruling party dominates the debate, using defamation legislation to criminalize critical speech.

Dissenting voices face threats, intimidation, and arrests. The censorship of independent media and restricted access to the internet, often justified by national security, further complicates matters. Despite this, calls for inclusive dialogue and reforms are emerging, evidenced by the resistance of independent journalists and human rights organizations. The freedom of assembly, essential to civil and political rights, is also abused; although international agreements and the Constitution provide protections, its exercise is limited by restrictive measures. Peaceful protests are often suppressed under the pretext of maintaining order, while authorized gatherings are subjected to discouraging conditions. The violence of security forces creates an atmosphere of fear, contradicting government statements about dialogue.

Defending the freedom of assembly is crucial for democracy in Burundi and requires legislative changes and genuine political will. The calls for spaces for dialogue and mobilization around social injustices reveal a persistent desire for participation, despite repression, and highlight the need for a dynamic civil society to strengthen democracy and protect fundamental rights. Thus, during the period from June 2020 to June 29, 2025, the Iteka League has recorded cases of arrests, with a worrying total, and in several cases, the victims of these human rights violations are members of opposition political parties, mainly from the CNL party, FRODEBU, UPRONA, CDP, Coalition Burundi bwa Bose, and other opposition members.

A. ARREST AND ARBITRARY DETENTION (the following of page 28)

During the period covered by this report, 3,265 cases of arrests were recorded by the Iteka league. Among these cases, 1,089 cases, or 33.6%, are reported in the Makamba province, often due to the seasonal mass movements of youth towards Tanzania in search of employment, who are unfortunately accused of joining rebel groups. In Bujumbura Mayorship, 462 cases, or 14.2%, were recorded, followed by Ngozi province with 272 cases of arrests, or 8.3%.



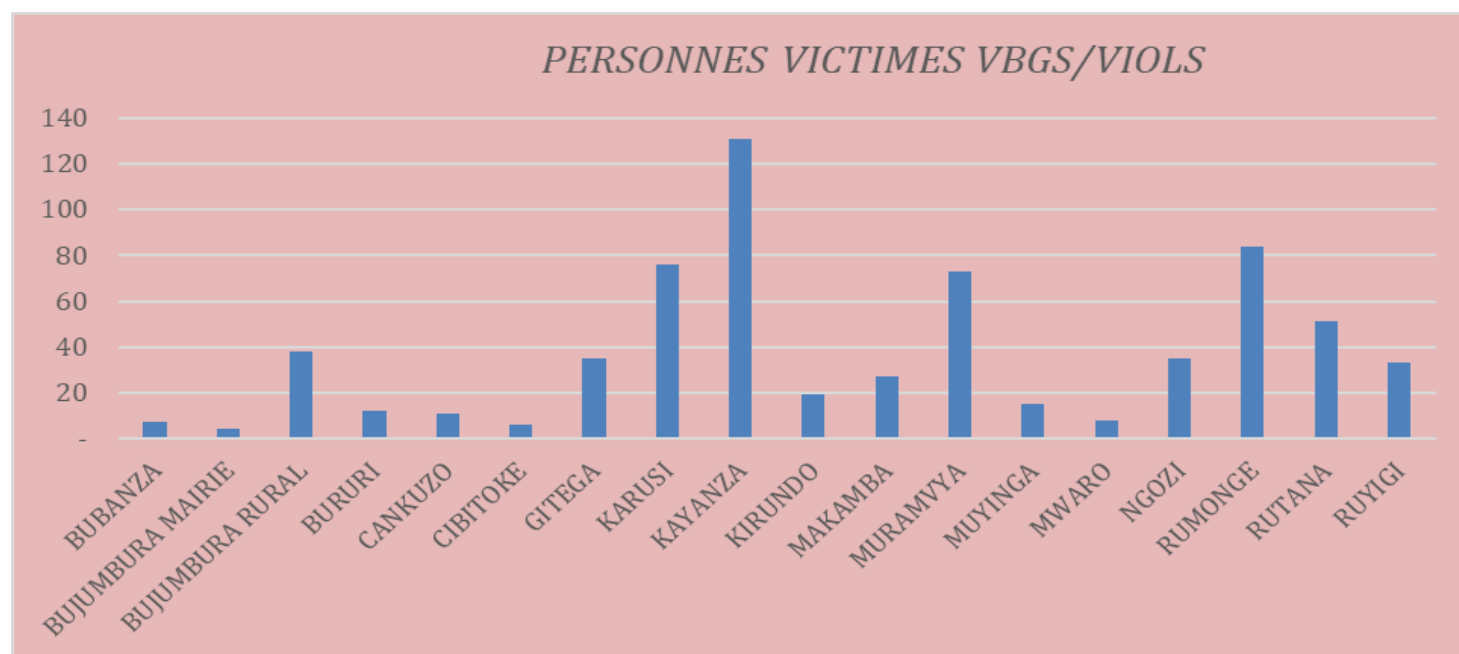
IVI.1.5. GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE/RAPE

Between June 20, 2020 and June 29, 2025, under the regime of President Evariste Ndayishimiye, women's rights are regularly violated, with cases of domestic violence and rape affecting even minors often being minimized. Data indicate a troubling increase in these acts, linked to precarious socio-economic contexts and a lack of legal protection. Women, with no recourse, are vulnerable, struggling to obtain institutional support; only a few women's protection organizations have helped the victims, but the resources remain limited. Despite laws intended to protect them, enforcement is insufficient, with security forces and the youth Imbonerakure of the ruling party sometimes being involved in the violence themselves.

The stigmatization of victims and the tendency to resolve issues internally fuel a culture of silence. Moreover, the lack of adequate support services, such as access to healthcare or legal assistance, complicates the situation. Awareness efforts are sporadic, despite the work of some civil society groups in a context of restricted freedom of expression. This highlights the challenges of gender equality claims, where the struggle for women's dignity is linked to the political and social evolution of the country.

IVI.1.5. GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE/RAPE (the following of page 29)

During the period considered for this report, the Iteka League recorded 665 cases of victims of GBV/SEXUAL ASSAULT in the provinces of the country. As the chart below illustrates, the Kayanza province stands out with 131 cases, accounting for 19.7%, followed by the Rumonge province with 84 cases or 12.6%, and in third place is the Karusi province with 76 cases or 11.4%. It should be noted that the alleged perpetrators remain state agents, young Imbonerakure, private individuals, and traders affiliated with the presidential party.



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IV. 2. ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

During the first five years of Ndayishimiye Evariste's presidency, the situation of economic, social, and cultural rights in Burundi highlights the challenges faced by the population in enjoying dignity and well-being. Human development indicators remain alarming, highlighting gaps in access to essential resources. Inflation has surged, with prices of basic goods skyrocketing due to rising production costs, supply chain disruptions, and excessive dependence on imports. The country has experienced fuel shortages, causing long queues and price increases due to speculation. Despite an abundance of fuel in warehouses, poor distribution by importers exacerbates the situation.

A shortage of foreign currency, primarily in US dollars, complicates the importation of essential goods. This has created a gap between the official exchange rate (around 2,900 BIF for 1 USD) and the parallel rate, reaching up to 7,500 BIF. As a result, inflation soared from 7.5% in 2020 to over 26.1% in March 2025, while Burundi's public debt was estimated at around 2,048 million dollars in 2024, representing 43.18% of GDP. However, other sources indicate that public debt could reach higher levels, with a debt-to-GDP ratio of 62% by the end of 2024, according to the IMF. The increase in public debt by 14.5% to 4,763.7 billion Burundian francs is concerning, as it raises questions about the country's ability to repay its debts. Inflation in Burundi has exceeded 30%, reaching 36.4% in December 2024, according to the IMF. This rise is attributed to the rapid depreciation of the exchange rate in the parallel market and the monetization of the budget deficit.

This economic crisis has significantly reduced purchasing power and worsened poverty among Burundians. Youth unemployment, which represents a significant part of the population, remains another challenge, exacerbated by a stagnant formal sector due to restrictive policies. The economy, dominated by agriculture, must be supported by initiatives to increase employment, productivity, and diversification.

On this matter, the Iteka League has repeatedly lamented that this agricultural sector has been dominated by high-ranking individuals who, for their own interests, interfere in this production chain, controlling access to improved/certified seeds and chemical fertilizers by ordinary citizens who pay the required fees into the account of the FOMI fertilizer manufacturing company but do not receive sufficient quantities. Basic necessities have been lacking over the past two years, 2024 and 2023. The gap between the official exchange rate and the market rate is at the root of the scarcity of essential goods. In terms of employment, there is a noticeable inability to create sustainable jobs, which increases social vulnerability and creates tensions. Foreign investments have decreased due to political instability and an unreliable economic climate.

Despite reforms to improve investment, Burundi continues to operate in an environment that is unattractive for foreign capital. Crucial infrastructure projects for economic growth also suffer from this lack of investment, limiting innovation and competitiveness. These accumulated challenges prevent Ndayishimiye's Government from laying strong foundations for sustainable development, requiring collaboration between national and international actors. The public policies implemented since his arrival have a direct impact on the respect of these rights.

IV. 2. ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS (the following of page 31)

Concerning education, efforts to improve infrastructure and expand basic education have been announced, but inequalities and high poverty persist. Many families are forced to choose between school fees and food needs, preventing children from accessing education, which jeopardizes their future and exacerbates social exclusion, a lack of teachers, and the departure of teachers to foreign countries in search of better treatment, hindering national development.

Regarding the right to health, a picture emerges where, despite the Government's promises to improve care, many NGOs report concerning realities. In rural areas, access to health services remains limited, often due to underdeveloped medical infrastructures and the existence of endemic diseases such as malaria. This situation highlights the urgency for a strengthened commitment to the funding and training of health professionals. Concerning working conditions, an atmosphere of informality and insecurity prevails, leaving many workers in total precariousness, without any social protection. Although some reforms have partially alleviated this vulnerability, doubts remain about the Government's actual capacity to ensure working conditions that respect the fundamental rights of citizens.

Furthermore, the deregulation of certain sectors only exacerbates these inequalities, keeping a large part of the population in a state of precariousness and economic dependency. This complex reality, at the crossroads of economic, social, and cultural issues, calls for a critical reassessment of current governance, in order to aspire to a sustainable improvement in the quality of life in Burundi.

ELECTIONS 2025 : RIGHT TO VOTE

The electoral context in Burundi was dominated by the preparation for the elections, the elections themselves, the proclamation of the results of the legislative and communal elections, and their management. The electoral climate during this process revealed a series of significant events illustrating an alarming and highly problematic situation.

The organized elections were marred by dubious practices, such as the exclusion of opposition parties through a rigid electoral code limiting opposition candidacies, forced contributions, and a campaign marked by intimidation and death threats against opposition members,

On the elections' event in June 2025, meetings were held by local leaders to orchestrate electoral fraud, including strategies such as early ballot stuffing, voter intimidation, and discouragement from voting for parties other than the CNDD-FDD. During the elections on June 5, 2025, irregularities were highlighted, with polling stations opening before the scheduled time, ballot stuffing, and voters casting their ballots multiple times.

The presence of observers, particularly those from the Catholic Church, has been systematically limited, often under the shadow of acts of violence. Political representatives have been apprehended for refusing to sign reports before the end of the voting. In Buruhukiro, in the Nyanza commune of the Burunga Province, opposition activists faced threats to dissuade them from voting against the CNDD-FDD, while in Buhumuza, similar incidents have been reported, demonstrating a climate of violence and intimidation that largely excluded supporters of the opposition.

The counting was also marred by a blatant manipulation of the results, with observers and opposition representatives often intimidated or excluded. In the province of Gitega, cases of fraud were observed, including ballots found in the boxes before the polling stations opened and pressure exerted on voters to vote exclusively for the ruling party. Within the educational environment, students were forced to vote under the watch of supporters of the CNDD-FDD.

The preliminary results of the legislative and municipal elections dated June 5, 2025, which testify to an electoral charade, were published by the Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI), asserting that the CNDD-FDD won 5.5 million votes, or 96.51% of the ballots, while other parties, such as UPRONA and CNL, recorded very low results. The distribution of seats within the national assembly reflects a total domination of the CNDD-FDD, with all 100 elected deputies coming from this party, while other entities failed to reach the required 2% threshold for representation. The CENI's proclamation of an assembly entirely made up of members of the CNDD-FDD aligns with a regressive political dynamic, compromising the democratic foundations of the country. The refusals to accept these results by UPRONA, CNL, and the coalition Burundi bwa Bose, which denounce the legitimacy of this election, reveal a strong opposition to a system perceived as authoritarian.

From June 16 to 22, 2025, the political climate experienced an apparent serenity, which contrasted with the previous electoral turmoil. While supporters of the CNDD-FDD celebrated their victory, the opposition continued to label these elections a sham, citing among other issues the misuse of public funds, acts of intimidation, and ongoing threats against opposition activists, illustrating an environment of fear and repression. Intimidations of Catholic Church observers in certain dioceses of the country were reported on the eve of the elections. Additionally, allegations of agricultural land appropriations by CNDD-FDD members, as well as threats against opposition figures, underscore the urgency for political action to protect the fundamental rights of Burundian citizens.



Anyone should be respected

Vth PART: CONCLUSION

The situation of human rights in Burundi under the regime of President Evariste Ndayishimiye reveals a new political landscape full of challenges and complexities that should not be underestimated. The hopes raised by the regime at the beginning of the term in 2020 were subsequently disappointed after tumultuous years characterized by violence and ongoing political repression. Government policies regarding civil and political rights, as well as judicial independence, have often reflected the persistence of repressive measures characteristic of the previous administration. This trend raises concerns about the possibility of making substantial progress within the current political framework. The fundamental rights enshrined in international and regional treaties have not been upheld and respected, leading to a climate of fear among members of the opposition and civil society actors.

The institutional failures of the State to respect the fundamental rights and freedoms of populations, and particularly of political opponents, have been illustrated by tactics of intimidation, arbitrary detention, and systematic violations of freedom of expression, resulting in a frightening lockdown of the democratic space. The Government's rhetoric on truth and national reconciliation has not been translated into effective political initiatives that promote inclusivity or accountability. Moreover, the official discourse was in favor of some openings toward dialogue, but the reality on the ground rather reflects a chasm between government promises and the lived reality of Burundian citizens.

In short, the human rights situation under Ndayishimiye's leadership reflects a critical moment for Burundi. Political will remains essential in the implementation of Burundi's national and international commitments regarding the respect for human rights, and the role of national actors and international partners of Burundi will be crucial in using their influence to persuade the Government to end the cycle of repression.



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