

## BURUNDIAN LIGUE OF HUMAN RIGHTS "ITEKA"

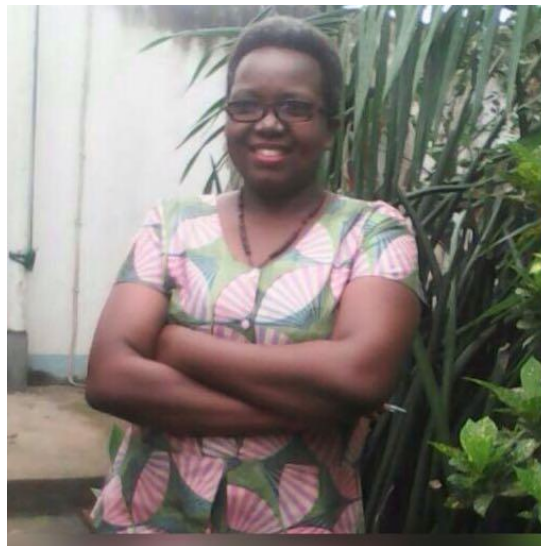
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***Weekly bulletin « ITEKA N'IJAMBO » n°476the Burundian Ligue of Human Rights "ITEKA"***

**Week from 26 May – 1 June 2025**



***In memory of Madam Marie Claudette Kwizera, Treasurer of Iteka, reported missing since December 10, 2015. From December 2015 to 1 June 2025, Iteka has documented at least 736 cases of enforced disappearances.***

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## ACRONYMS

<b>CDS</b>	: <i>Health Center</i>
<b>CECI</b>	: <i>Independent Communal Electoral Commission</i>
<b>CENI</b>	: <i>Independent National Electoral Commission</i>
<b>CEPI</b>	: <i>Independent Provincial 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>CVA</b>	: <i>Cerebrovascular Accident</i>
<b>DPEAE</b>	: <i>Provincial Directorate of the Environment, Agriculture, and Livestock</i>
<b>DRC</b>	: <i>Democratic Republic of Congo</i>
<b>ECOFO</b>	: <i>Fundamental School</i>
<b>GBV</b>	: <i>Gender-Based Violence</i>
<b>SNR</b>	: <i>National Intelligence Service</i>
<b>UPRONA</b>	: <i>Union for National Progress</i>

## ***0. INTRODUCTION***

This bulletin provides an overview of the human rights situation in Burundi during the week of May 26 to June 1, 2025. The period was marked by growing political tension linked to elections marred by irregularities from the ruling party and its members. Highlights of this week include: at least 4 people killed, including 2 found dead, including a woman; one CNL party member abducted and another tortured; two cases of rape, involving children, including a one-year-and-six-month-old infant; and 5 arbitrary arrests, three of which involved CNL party members.

The main alleged perpetrators of these violations are administrative officials, police officers, and young Imbonerakure affiliated with the ruling party.

### ***I. CONTEXT***

#### ***I.1. POLITICAL CONTEXT***

##### **Pre-election tensions in Cibitoke province: the opposition under pressure**

With less than a week to go before the communal and legislative elections in Burundi, Cibitoke province is marked by intimidation and targeted violence against opposition parties. The Imbonerakure are singled out, while local authorities minimize the severity of the situation.

As Burundi's general elections approach, the six communes of Cibitoke province are experiencing growing tensions. Several opposition parties, such as UPRONA, CNL, and the Burundi Bwa Bose coalition, are denouncing a series of acts of intimidation and violence that they attribute to the Imbonerakure, affiliated with the presidential party CNDD-FDD.

According to different local sources, the situation has worsened recently. "Our members are constantly threatened. Some have even fled to Tanzania or the DRC, despite the ongoing war," reveals an opposition member, speaking anonymously. Reports indicate death threats, physical attacks, and even forced withdrawals of voter's cards, mainly targeting opposition members.

Even more worrying, these practices are reportedly tolerated or even encouraged by the administrative authorities and the CENI, according to the parties involved. "This election is already locked," laments an official from the Burundi Bwa Bose coalition. "We demand an immediate end to acts of intolerance to ensure a free, transparent, and fair electoral process."

A local political expert shares this assessment. According to him, the current state of the electoral code, combined with the de facto exclusion of Agathon Rwasa's CNL from the electoral process, jeopardizes the credibility of this election.

In response, the authorities reject these allegations. Alexandre Ngoraguze, CNDD-FDD leader in the new Bujumbura province, assures that the political atmosphere is calm. "Voters have the freedom to choose their leaders. We will not tolerate any excesses," he asserts. According to the Governor of Cibitoke, he has not received any official complaints, adding that he remains open to anyone who feels aggrieved.

With communal and legislative elections approaching, the democratic future of Cibitoke province and the country will depend on the ability of institutions to ensure a fair and peaceful electoral process.

##### **Intimidation and election preparation in Bwambarangwe commune, Kirundo province**

Since May 25, 2025, in Bwambarangwe commune, young Imbonerakure, led by former councilor to the communal administrator Miburo Salvator and current councilor Damien Twagirayezu, nicknamed

Kanyenye, have initiated a campaign to collect voter's cards from members of other opposition parties as well as those of CNDD FDD they deem untrustworthy, threatening them that the vote will no longer be confidential and that they will have to vote in public.

Local witnesses claim that they started in Mukenke and Kimeza zones, with a large number of Imbonerakure mobilized for this task. Anyone who refuses is placed on a list of people to be monitored during election day.

Administrator Mukakabano Médiatrice is aware of this situation but explained that it aims to help people vote more effectively and providing them with advice.

Macumi Onésime, president of CECI in Kirundo commune, has advised school principals to collect and keep their voter's cards, especially those they doubt will vote for the ruling party, and to inform them that their cards have not been printed. For example, at Vumbi communal high school, more than 200 cards have not been returned to their owners. These cards will then be distributed to CNDD-FDD members they trust to ensure they vote for them.

### **A pre-election census sows fear in Cibitoke province**

Information received by Ligue Iteka on June 1, 2025, indicates that, a week before the elections scheduled for June 5, 2025, in Burundi, residents of Cibitoke province are experiencing tense days and nights. They say they are being forced to register on the lists of the ruling party, CNDD-FDD, as part of a census that started from the second week of the election campaign.

This count aims to count the votes that the ruling party is expected to collect in all households and on all hills. What particularly worries the population is that all people of voting age, regardless of political affiliation, are required to appear on these lists. Refusal to appear is seen as a declaration of opposition.

Those who refuse to register fear having their voter's cards withdrawn. However, those who accept claim to do so for fear of post-election reprisals.

### **Ten Burundi Bwa Bose coalition flags stolen in Randa**

On May 27, 2025, the Burundi Bwa Bose political coalition reported that ten of its flags had been stolen during a rally in Randa. The coalition describes this act as highly symbolic, aimed at reducing its visibility in the field. It suspects the CNDD-FDD's Imbonerakure youth league of being responsible for the theft and demands disciplinary action.

### **FLORINA party ends its campaign in Rugombo, focusing on agriculture and fishing**

On June 1, 2025, in Rugombo commune, Cibitoke province, FLORINA party completed its electoral campaign in Rugombo commune, Cibitoke province. At this closing rally, the party president Cécile Nshimirimana revealed a program focused on supporting farmers and herders, as well as modernizing fishing on Lake Tanganyika. She also called on voters to support CNDD-FDD party in other provinces.

Before a crowd of supporters, Nshimirimana detailed her party's priorities for the rural sector. She promised free distribution of selected seeds to boost agricultural production and the granting of interest-free loans to enable farmers to expand their activities. "It is time for our farmers to produce more without going into debt," she declared to applause.

Herders were not forgotten: the program also provides non-profit compensation to support them in the event of livestock loss or major hardship.

Another highlight of her speech was the valorization of Lake Tanganyika, which she described as "a treasure rich in fish but still underexploited." The president of Florina party promised to introduce modern fishing technologies for the sustainable and profitable exploitation of this natural resource.

Before concluding, Cécile Nshimirimana announced the continuation of the campaign in other communes of Bujumbura province. However, she surprised the audience by calling on voters in provinces not yet visited to vote for CNDD-FDD party. This gesture was interpreted by some as a strategic overture or a sign of political alliance.

#### **Disruption of the Burundi Bwabose coalition's election campaign activities in Gitega commune.**

On Sunday, May 25, 2025, the Burundi Bwabose Coalition organized an election campaign on the basketball court located in Gitega city. According to our source, several motorcyclists gathered to support this coalition.

During this activity, Imbonerakure, dressed in CNDD-FDD uniforms and equipped with communication radios (Motorola), circulated around the rally site.

We learned that one of these Imbonerakure, known as Chadrack Niyonkuru, aged 29, was caught taking photos of the license plates of motorcycles present at the scene. He was arrested by the participants and spent the night in Gitega provincial police station cell to calm the situation.

To date, it is unclear whether he has been released, as this appears to be an attempt to cover up the incident, according to our source.

Since the following day, several motorcyclists who participated in the campaign have had their motorcycles seized. As of the evening of Tuesday, May 27, 2025, six motorcycles had already been confiscated, causing great concern within the motorcyclist community.

The administrator of Gitega commune, Dr. Jacques Nduwimana, stated that election-related matters fall under the jurisdiction of the CEPI, while those relating to the seizure of motorcycles fall under the jurisdiction of the National Police.

#### **Political denunciation by UPRONA members in Bugendana commune.**

The president of UPRONA party in Gitega province strongly condemns the attitude of a health worker at Mutaho Hospital, located in the new commune of Bugendana, in Gitega province. This health worker confiscated the voter's cards of some citizens, which he kept in his office, promising them health insurance cards in exchange.

Déo Bigirimana made this statement this Thursday in Mugera zone of Bugendana commune, during a meeting with local party officials in that commune to discuss the upcoming elections. This official called on the relevant authorities to do everything possible to ensure that these cards are returned to their rightful owners.

#### **End of CNDD-FDD electoral campaign marked by absolute silence in Karusi province.**

Generally speaking, a climate of silence has spread throughout Karusi province by the end of the electoral campaign. However, meetings of CNDD-FDD members continue unabated, beginning every day very early in the morning, around 5:00 a.m., at the party offices, led by the zonal secretary and the zonal head of the Imbonerakure, Alexis Bandyatuyaga and Jérôme. During the campaign, except CNDD-FDD, which rallied its members in the field, no other party was able to gather its own. Only a single

vehicle or motorcycle with a loudspeaker was visible, revealing their lack of campaign resources. In conclusion, the future remains uncertain as to what the coming days hold.

#### **Intimidation related to voter cards at the Mutaho IDP site.**

Displaced persons living in Mutaho IDP site in Gitega province report violations of their right to vote. According to several reports, after receiving their voter's cards, some are forced to surrender them or in exchange for money. These cards are then reportedly given to trusted CNDD-FDD party members to vote for them.

The situation has deteriorated recently: the displaced are now facing threats of eviction from the site if they refuse to surrender their voter's cards. Jean de Dieu, a nurse at Mutaho hospital and leader of the Imbonerakure in Mutaho center, is cited as the source of this intimidation. Local sources report that Jean de Dieu receives a fee from Mbazumutima Anatole DCE Mutaho, also president of CNDD-FDD in the extended Bugendana commune (Bugendana + Mutaho), as a reward for each card collected.

Asked about the situation by a journalist, Melchiade Nihorimbere, a communal administrator, stated that these incidents were the responsibility of the CECI. Paul Bankibigwira, president of the CECI (Bugendana + Mutaho), also blamed the local authorities of Mutaho. He added that those who handed in their cards did not understand their importance. On this issue, Dr. Dieudonné Habonimana, head of Mutaho Health District, responded that if medical cards were to be missing, responsibilities would be established.

#### **Assassination threats to three UPRONA party members in Giharo commune, Rutana province**

On May 27, 2025, a CNDD-FDD party meeting was held on Kibimba hill, in Butezi zone, Giharo commune, Rutana province. During this event, party members, including Zacharie Batungwanayo, head of Kibimba hill, and Léonard Ruhoranyi, CNDD-FDD representative on that hill, alerted the public that it was necessary to use all means to eliminate, suppress, and remove three persons: Usuël Ntarutimana, UPRONA party representative in Giharo commune; Théoneste, UPRONA zonal representative in Butezi zone; and Venant Nyobeye, UPRONA party member.

According to local sources, Zacharie and Léonard are supported by Cyriaque Komezurugendo, known as Komezumusonga, CNDD-FDD party's zonal representative in Butezi zone, as well as those on the MPs list. UPRONA party members are requesting the intervention from public security authorities to protect their threatened lives.

#### **Death threats against a UPRONA party member if he does not leave the party to join CNDD-FDD party, in Giharo commune, Rutana province.**

On May 29, 2025, around 6:00 a.m., on Mutwana hill in Butezi zone, Gilbert Ndayisenga, a member of UPRONA party, was summoned by Vincent Nemerimana, the head of Mutwana hill, along with his associates, Bernard Ntirandekura, a representative of CNDD-FDD party, and Imbonerakure, including Bahati, Niyonzima, Zacharie, nicknamed Sage, and Zabulon, to Mutwana hill head's office.

According to on-site testimony, they ordered him to leave UPRONA party and forcibly join CNDD-FDD party and threatened to kill him if he refused, stating that they would kill him at any time and that they would track him every day.

## **Political party electoral campaigns in the communes of Rutana province**

CNDD-FDD party's electoral campaigns in Bukemba commune, Rutana province, began on May 20, 2025. On that day, a rally was held on Murama-Rugwe hill, followed by two other rallies, one in Kabanga on May 22, 2025, and the other in Muyombwe on May 25, 2025. Each of these events included a presentation of CNDD-FDD program and information on the voting procedure. Regarding UPRONA party, a meeting was held on May 22, 2025, in Butare, also in Bukemba commune, where the party program and the electoral process were discussed.

CNDD-FDD also campaigned in Kayogoro commune, Makamba province, during the week of May 19-25, 2025, intensifying its efforts in all zones of the commune. In Giharo commune, Rutana province, electoral campaigns were organized on May 24, 2025, in Butezi, Gakungu, and Muzye zones. These campaigns aimed to inform the Bagumyabanga population about the party's projects.

CNDD-FDD continued its activities in Rutana province and commune by organizing electoral campaigns in the hills of Mika, Nyanzuki, and Rutana on May 19 and 24, 2025. These events provided an opportunity to present the party's program and explain the voting process to participants. Furthermore, on May 25, 2025, UPRONA party held a meeting in Rutana commune and province, where, after presenting its projects, officials informed the BADASIGANA "members of the said party" on the voting procedure.

In Mpinga-Kayove commune, Rutana province, CNDD-FDD organized a meeting on May 22, 2025, on Gihinga hill, led by the zonal secretary and political mobilizers, to instruct the Bagumyabanga on voting procedures. The CDP party was also active in this commune, organizing a meeting on May 24, 2025, on Mpinga hill, where its program and voting procedure were presented. CNDD-FDD then continued its campaigns in Gitanga, Rutana province, with a rally on May 21, 2025, on Rusovu sub-hill, where details of the party's project were shared, followed by explanations on voting procedures.

On May 20, 2025, CDP party held a rally in Musongati, Rutana province, to discuss its projects and electoral procedures with its members. Finally, CNDD-FDD continued its campaign in Musongati commune between May 23 and 25, 2025, in Shanga zone, thus strengthening its electoral presence in the region.

## **Cheating reported at the closing of the election campaign in Giharo commune.**

As of June 1, 2025, in Giharo commune, Rutana province, as it was the last day of the election campaign, the chairmen and other polling stations members had already begun collecting materials to be used during the June 5, 2025 election. At that time, our source noticed that some individuals were on the communal council list for the new Musongati commune, who were also chairmen of the polling stations in the commune. Their names are:

1. Violette, a teacher at Ecofo Rubaho;
2. Masumbuko Sostène, director of Ecofo Nyamateke;
3. Ngendakumana Léonce, Secretary of DCE Giharo.

The other political parties' members demanded that the electoral law be applied to all.

## **The withdrawal of voter's cards in Gashikanwa commune, Ngozi province.**

According to our information, several opposition party members in numerous hills have been deprived of their receipts. During a rally of the Burundi bwa Bose coalition this Sunday, June 1, 2025, on the main basketball ground named "BPEAE" in Ngozi, members of this coalition expressed their



dissatisfaction with the retrieval of receipts by hill heads Cihonda (Lionel) and Maruri (Bucumi Jean) from those who believe they do not support CNDD FDD.

Among the discontented was a 65-year-old man, Bapfumukeko Bernard. He reported that these hill heads affirmed that they would vote for these individuals deemed suspect. Minani Dismas, a representative of the Burundi Bwa Bose coalition, stated that he was aware of this situation in other hills and planned to contact the relevant authorities to allow these people to retrieve their receipts.

### **Climate of fear and pressure during the election campaign: CNDD-FDD accused of spreading intimidating messages in Makamba**

Just weeks before the general elections in Burundi, the campaign practices of the ruling CNDD-FDD party are raising strong criticism in Makamba province. Messages conveyed through vehicles equipped with official loudspeakers and as well as targeted actions in schools and markets are fueling concerns among a part of the population, who consider that as acts of intimidation for political purposes.

In several quarters of Makamba commune, as well as around schools, vehicles belonging, according to reports, to different public services such as health or communes are playing threatening songs at high volume. One phrase in particular recurred:

*"Twubake tugavye abansi barakaka. Ukuboko kumwe gufate micro ukundi gufate inkinzo, rwaruka mubona murya mukaryama mukiga ntimwibazeko igihugu ari umukate umwana arira bagaca bamuha, kiragwanirwa!"*

This extract, which became a campaign slogan, was actually an excerpt from a speech by Révérien Ndikuriyo, secretary general of CNDD-FDD, at the official launch of the party's campaign. Since then, it has been echoed in songs played at full blast in public spaces.

These words, according to several residents, are perceived as calls for war mobilization, or even veiled threats against those who do not support the ruling party. "These are scary messages; they want us to believe that not supporting their party means being an enemy of the nation," confided a resident of Nyaburumba quarter, speaking anonymously.

### **The opposition denounces a climate of terror**

Civil society and opposition parties are speaking of the instrumentalization of public institutions and the militarization of political discourse. "The use of public vehicles, the broadcasting of songs that incite fear, and the forced mobilization of students or shopkeepers are practices that are more akin to intimidation than democratic competition," laments a local leader of the Burundi Bwa Bose coalition. These practices are worsening an already tense political climate in the country, as numerous cases of arbitrary arrests and violence have been documented in recent weeks.

In Makamba, the abuses observed in CNDD-FDD party's campaign are rekindling fears of a biased electoral process. Respect for fundamental rights, such as education, freedom of assembly, and the neutrality of public institutions, appears questionable, in favor of a mobilization discourse with disturbing overtones.

### **Manipulation and intimidation of opponents in the run-up to elections in Burundi**

As the election campaign is in full swing, worrying signs of political intimidation and voting rights violations are increasing, mainly against supporters of the opposition to CNDD-FDD ruling party. In several hills of the new Burunga province, speeches to CNDD-FDD members are inciting the prevention

of students, cooks and housekeepers from voting. Instead, they are being asked to prepare proxies so that their votes can be used to vote for CNDD-FDD party, pretexting that these groups would vote for the opposition. "No student, no cook, no housekeeper will vote. Have them sign proxies. On election day, we will all be behind our cell leader (inamashingiro). If an opponent arrives, we will get rid of them before they vote to identify those who are hiding among us while campaigning for the opposition." » These instructions are causing concern even among CNDD-FDD's own supporters, as they violate the fundamental right to vote freely.

At the same time, orders are circulating in WhatsApp messaging groups involving administrative and police authorities to send secret agents to attend opposition party meetings, take photos, record remarks, and send detailed reports to CNDD-FDD officials. "Don't send a zone head; they are known. Send an unknown member to listen, take photos, record, and send us a detailed report." » These practices have been observed repeatedly in the new province of Burunga, where opposition parties say they fear for their safety, not only during the campaign but also after the elections, as was the case for several demonstrators arrested or disappeared after the anti-third-term marches in 2015.

On May 25, 2025, in Makamba, an Imbonerakure from Gisenyi zone was expelled from a UPRONA rally after being caught recording speeches. Witnesses accused her of working to collect evidence to disrupt or suppress the activities of rival parties. The opposition denounces a climate of electoral terror and calls on national and international observers to closely monitor Burundi's 2025 electoral process.

### **The progress of the 2025 election campaign in Rumonge commune and province.**

In Rumonge commune, two political parties, namely CNDD-FDD and UPRONA, compete on the ground. There is intimidation by young Imbonerakure who prevent members of other parties from attending meetings, failing which they will be lynched. On May 18, 2025, the day of UPRONA party meeting, the governor's office prevented the stadium from receiving power, even though the stadium is connected via the provincial office's power supply. They resorted to using a generator. At Rumonge International Port, the Maritime Director, a former MP from the ruling party, prevented the port's dockers, UPRONA party members, from working at the port. The Port Director told them they would return to work after UPRONA party's victory.

### **Violence against two CNL members beaten by Imbonerakure and a party office destroyed in Kiganda commune.**

As the election campaign for MPs and communal councilors is ending, relations between members of political parties remain tense. On May 26, 2025, two CNL party members, Karikurubu Clément, aged 27, and Niyonzima Tite, aged 25, both from Nkomwe hill in Kiganda commune, were severely assaulted by Imbonerakure from the same hill, led by Nkengurutse Gilbert, aged 28. These two CNL members were preparing to place their party's signs and insignia on the party's Nkomwe hill office when they were attacked by the Imbonerakure group, who severely beat them.

The group also completely ransacked the office. Despite the local CNL leader in Kiganda, Karorero Gabriel, filing a complaint with the police and the communal administration, no arrests have been done. According to local sources, the victim, Karikurubu Clément, is admitted in Kiganda hospital.

### **CNDD-FDD outreach: home-to-home teaching in Cankuzo province**

Information obtained by Ligue Iteka on May 30, 2025, reveals that in Cankuzo province, CNDD-FDD party has implemented a home-to-home teaching strategy. According to local sources, every hill and

quarter in this province is coordinated by young Imbonerakure, mainly job seekers, who go from home to home with sample ballots. They encourage residents to check the number 1, representing CNDD-FDD symbol. Members of other political parties consider this action a violation of the electoral code.

### **Imbonerakure threats and intimidation to CNL party members in Gisuru commune, Ruyigi province**

Between May 26 and June 1, 2025, on Gisuru hill and commune, Ruyigi province, the family of Serge Bucumi, a member of CNL party and former teacher at Gisuru Communal High School and currently a teacher at Gahinga Communal High School, was pressured by young Imbonerakure. They demanded that he hand over his voter's card and that of his wife so they could vote for them on election day, as they knew he would not vote for them. Local reports indicate that, targeting CNL members in the communes of Ruyigi province, particularly Gisuru, Kinyinya, and Nyabitsinda, young Imbonerakure threatened to lock these members to their homes throughout election day, only allowing them to leave afterward.

### **CNDD-FDD communal secretary promises money to influence elections in Butaganzwa Commune, Ruyigi Province**

On May 30, 2025, on Muriza hill in Butaganzwa commune, Ruyigi province, a meeting was held where the CNDD-FDD communal secretary declared that 3,000,000 Bif would be given to members if the CNDD-FDD won 100% of the vote. In this commune, CNDD-FDD leaders informed their members that the hills would compete during the elections, and that those who obtained 100% of the vote would be rewarded with a sum of money. According to testimonies, during this same meeting, the communal secretary also mentioned that in Mishiha commune, Cankuzo province, the hill winning 100% of the vote would receive a bonus of one million. Legal experts describe these practices as vote buying.

### **Election campaign conducted by a provincial police commissioner in Ruyigi Province**

On May 27, 2025, at Ngarama Primary School in Ruyigi province, Jean Gentil, the provincial police commissioner, conducted an unauthorized election campaign by presenting to the school's teachers with specimens of CNDD-FDD party's parliamentary and communal councilor candidates. According to witnesses on the scene, the purpose of this initiative was to check whether the teachers knew how they would vote for No.1, CNDD-FDD party. The provincial commissioner's attitude surprised many people, given that a senior police officer, supposed to remain impartial, was involved in political activities.

### **Mobilization of children and use of public property during the closing of the election campaign in Ruyigi.**

On May 31, 2025, at Gasanda old market, the electoral campaign concluded with a parade around Ruyigi old market. Children aged 5 to 10, called "IBISWI VY'INKONA", were leading the parade, followed by Muslim women and other members of CNDD-FDD party. This spectacle surprised many people, wondering how such young children could be involved in political actions and how Muslim women participated in political demonstrations related to their beliefs. It should be noted that this electoral campaign was marked by the use of public property, such as State vehicles, particularly communal administrators' vans and other public service vehicles, largely mobilized by CNDD-FDD party.

## ***I.2. JUDICIAL CONTEXT***

### **Flagrance criminal proceedings before Rutana High Court.**

According to our source, Rutana High Court imposed a 20-year sentence of penal servitude on Jean Marie Bizimana, a 40-year-old man from and living on Murembera hill, Gakungu zone in Giharo commune. He was convicted of having punched his wife, Médiatrice Nkeshimana, to death. This crime occurred on Thursday of last week around 11 p.m. Jean Marie Bizimana did not deny the facts against him but stated that he had not premeditated this murder. And that he had simply reacted out of anger. Since that day, his wife came home around 11 p.m. and he could not bear the situation, he jumped on her until he knocked her unconscious. She died while being rushed to the health center. He and his wife had seven children, the youngest of whom is 2 years and 4 months old.

## ***I.3. ECONOMIC CONTEXT***

### **The rising price of coffee in Bubanza province: between satisfaction and concerns**

Information received by Ligue Iteka on May 30, 2025, reports that the price per kilo of coffee beans has risen from 1,380 to 2,800 Bif in Musigati commune. While this increase has been welcomed by some coffee producers, others still consider it insufficient in the face of rising living costs. Local officials are optimistic and see encouraging momentum for the revival of coffee production.

In Musigati, this recent coffee price rise has generated mixed opinions among farmers. For some, it represents a long-awaited step forward, while others are skeptical about the scope of this increase, given the cost of living and rising production costs.

"This is a step in the right direction. We have been waiting for years for a rise in coffee prices. This gives us some hope," says a producer from Kivyuka hill. On the other hand, others, less optimistic, believe this increase is still too low: "Food prices keep rising. With this price, it's becoming difficult to get by. If the situation doesn't change, many might give up growing coffee," warns another farmer in the region.

In response, local authorities are reassuring the population. The communal administrator of Musigati points out that interest in growing coffee is growing again. "Many farmers are returning to this crop and replacing old coffee trees with young plants, which is a good sign for the sector," he emphasizes.

The provincial director of the Environment, Agriculture, and Livestock of Bubanza shares this opinion. He emphasizes that this dynamic is fostered by support programs for coffee growers, including the distribution of young plants and technical assistance.

Despite disagreements over payments, the coffee sector appears to be beginning to recover in Musigati commune. It remains to be seen whether this renewal will be sustainable and sufficiently beneficial for farmers to prevent a gradual disengagement.

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

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

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

##### ***II.1.1.1. PERSONS KILLED BY STATE AGENTS OR IMBONERAKURE MILITIA.***

#### **A person killed in Kirundo commune and province by Imbonerakure**

On May 27, 2025, on Cewe hill in Kirundo commune and province, the body of Jean Ncamihigo, married and father of five children, a former member of CNDD-FDD, was found submerged in the waters of

Lake Cohoha. According to witnesses on the scene, he had been arrested on May 25, 2025, by Imbonerakure along with their leader Macumi, accused of raping a mentally disabled girl from Runyonza hill.

According to the same witnesses, they took her to the hill court, represented by Béatrice, who decided to take her to the correction place called Mw'ikosorero, where opponents to CNDD-FDD party are taken to be tortured. He has not returned, and neighbors say the victim did not commit rape. These Imbonerakure warned the victim's wife and five children to be killed if they report the perpetrators.

#### ***II.1.1.2. PERSONS KILLED FOLLOWING THE SETTLEMENT OF SCORES***

##### **A woman killed in Mugamba commune, Bururi province**

Information received by Ligue Iteka on May 29, 2025, indicates that on May 18, 2025, Dorine Ndayikunda died at Bujumbura military hospital from injuries after her father-in-law, Joseph Ntampera, threw a spear at her back on May 16, 2025, at her home on Gakaranka hill, Kivumu zone, Mugamba commune, Bururi province.

According to members of the victim's family, Sinzumusi Evariste, the victim's husband has also been jailed in the same prison for 3 months, accused of having tortured her and seriously injured her arm in February 2025. This family denounces the slowness of the prosecution and Bururi High Court in processing the case of injuries that led to her death. While the alleged perpetrator is jailed in Bururi prison, this family is demanding the arrest of the victim's mother-in-law, Ndayisenga Francine, who, according to this family, is an accomplice. Her father-in-law accuses her of being an accomplice in the arrest of her son, Sinzumusi, the victim's husband.

#### ***II.1.2. BODIES FOUND***

##### **A body found in Ruvyironza River in Gitega Province.**

On Monday, May 26, 2025, at around 7:30 p.m., a body was found in Ruvyironza River, connecting Rweza hill, Mungwa zone, Gitega commune and province, and Nyabihanga commune in Mwaro province. Our source on Rweza hill indicated that the victim had not any identification documents or other evidence that could identify him. Nkeshimana Emmanuel, Mungwa zone head, suggested that the victim was swept away by the river.

However, several witnesses present at the time of the body's discovery believe that the person was killed elsewhere and then dumped into the river. This hypothesis is based on the visible injuries to the neck, resembling stab wounds (probably a machete), and the condition of the victim's shirt, which was torn, although it appeared relatively new according to our source.

The body was taken to Gitega Hospital mortuary while awaiting the identification of the deceased's family. Questions remain about the discovery of the body during these hours of the night, which leaves questions about the exact circumstances of this nocturnal discovery.

The conditions and testimonies surrounding the discovery of the body, particularly the unusual time of discovery, should be examined to assess whether there may have been a cover-up or staging.

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

On May 26, 2025, at around 7:00 p.m., on Nyagasebeyi hill, Ruhororo commune, Ngozi province, the body of Jean Mpezamihigo, aged 33, son of Emmanuel Banyankirubusa and Marie Bukuru, from

Ryarunyinya hill, Ruhororo commune, Ngozi province, was found lying in a eucalyptus field 70 meters from the road leading to Ruhororo. According to our local witness, he was decapitated.

The same witnesses added that the administration and the government doctor also went to the scene to assess the body. Jean Nitezimana, aged 25, son of Barumwete Jerome and Nzimenya Spès, born on Ryarunyinya hill, Ruhororo commune, and Arakaza Djuma, aged 19, son of Bahate Ramadan and Nyandwi Clotilde, born on TABA hill, Ruhororo commune, all Imbonerakure, were arrested in possession of the already deceased victim's belongings (a bicycle and a phone).

The victim had been with them the day before at Musenyi modern market around 6 p.m. In collaboration with the administration and the grieving family, decided for burial.

### ***II.1.3. PERSONS ABDUCTED AND/OR MISSING***

#### **A CNL party member abducted in Bujumbura mairie**

As of May 30, 2025, in Bujumbura province, Alain Jules Bizimana, a CNL party member, approximately 31 years old, was reported missing. He was abducted around 9:00 a.m. in Bujumbura downtown, in front of a place called "BATA." From rural Kanyosha and residing in Kajiji quarter, Mugere commune, Bujumbura province, Alain Jules Bizimana had left for downtown for work to support his family in Kiyenzi.

His abduction was carried out by armed men traveling in a double-cabin van with tinted windows. One of the abductors was in civilian clothes, the other wore a Burundian police uniform.

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

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

##### **A person tortured in Ngozi commune and province**

On May 23, 2025, at Muremera stadium in Ngozi downtown, Ngozi commune and province, where CNDD-FDD was campaigning, Batakanwa, a supporter of Agathon Rwaswa, was beaten by young Imbonerakure from Muremera quarter, one of whom is nicknamed "Turyu." According to local witnesses, these Imbonerakure forced him to wear a CNDD-FDD party beret. The same sources add that he refused repeatedly and eventually threw it to the ground. The Imbonerakure who were present accused him of throwing their party emblems to the ground and then beat him. People who witnessed the scene saved him before it was too late.

#### ***II.2.2. RAPE***

##### **A little girl raped in Rumonge commune and province**

On May 29, 2025, on Gihwanya hill, Rumonge commune and province, Q. M. N, aged 6, was the victim of sexual violence by Venant Niyikigongwe, aged 23, Imbonerakure, a neighboring shopkeeper who often called her, supposedly to offer her candy, and finally ended up raping her. According to the victim's parents, the act was realized by her parents while washing her private parts, as the child was in so much pain, and they asked for the perpetrator. The perpetrator was arrested and taken to Rumonge police station cell. As for the victim, she was taken to Humura center for holistic care.

##### **An infant raped in Rumonge commune and province**

On May 31, 2025, at around 8 a.m., on Birimba hill, Rumonge zone, commune, and province, I.D.A., aged 1 year and 6 months, residing on the same hill, was raped by Iteriteka Alfred, aged 15, a house worker who had been caught in the act by the child's mother before fleeing. Fortunately, he was caught by his employer, accompanied by the cell leader, and then taken to Rumonge police station cell. The victim was taken to Humura center and then to Rumonge hospital. It should be noted that the alleged perpetrator was also taken to Rumonge hospital to be examined for infectious diseases in order to determine whether the victim could take preventive medication.

### ***II.3. ARRESTS AND ARBITRARY DETENTION***

#### **Three young CNL party representatives arrested in Bubanza province**

On Thursday, May 29, 2025, three young members of the National Congress for Liberty (CNL), Bucumi Jérôme, Nshimwenimana Amissi, and Nimbeshaho Richard, were arrested in Munanira, in Musigati commune, as they were heading to a political meeting in Ruziba-Bukinga. Their offense is allegedly representing the CNL youth movement in their community and resisting pressure from the ruling party.

These young people are currently being jailed in Bubanza police cells, following an operation, according to reliable local sources, carried out by a group of Imbonerakure. This militia, linked to CNDD-FDD, reportedly acted on the orders of the local representative, a member of the ruling party, as well as the commune's project manager. The official accusation? "Illegal promotion of CNL ideology."

These arrests are not isolated cases. They are part of a broader context of political repression, where opponents, particularly young people, are intimidated, excluded, and even criminalized. Administrative arbitrariness combines with security pressure to hamper opposition activities. In this climate, political participation becomes not only an ignored right, but an individual danger.

The CNL communal leader in Musigati rightly deplores an arrest motivated by a refusal to join CNDD-FDD. He maintains that these young people were targeted for resisting local directives seeking to force them to join the party. This situation constitutes a serious violation of the Constitution, which guarantees every citizen the freedom of political choice.

#### **Two people arrested in Buhiga commune, Karuzi province**

On May 30, 2025, around 9 p.m. at Buhiga market, Buhiga zone and commune, Karuzi province, two young men, Ntahombaye and Issa, both CNDD/FDD members. Ntahombaye, a car and motorcycle cleaner (he washes cars), commonly known as Borayi, and Issa, a hairdresser, were arrested by police officers from Buhiga police station. According to local witnesses, the two were arguing over a water jerican, and the patrolling police handcuffed them and took them to the police station. According to the same witnesses, the locals surrounded them and the crowd grew to prevent the arrest, but the officer armed his rifle to disperse the crowd, and the two were taken to the cell. The population did not understand how a minor matter that could have been settled amicably could lead to incarceration. They were released on May 31, 2025, after paying a fine of 10,000 Bif each without receipt to the officer newly assigned to Buhiga post.

### ***III. SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL RIGHTS***

#### ***III.1. DISRUPTION OF ECONOMIC LIFE.***

##### **Elections - Almost total paralysis of socio-economic activities in Muramvya commune and province.**

Friday, May 30, 2025, was marked by an unprecedented paralysis of both economic and social activities in Muramvya commune and province.

Indeed, CNDD-FDD party organized an election campaign rally at Muramvya Royal Stadium.

Residents of different quarters were awakened around 4 a.m. by Imbonerakure using loudspeakers, whistles, and drums, even entering the plots, to demand everyone's presence at the stadium.

Thus, all stores and shops were forced to close until the end of the campaign. The same is for Muramvya central market, which did not open this Friday.

Concerning education, schools near the stadium did not offer classes despite the intensive end-of-year work. These schools include Muramvya High School, Ecofo Muramvya I, Ecofo Muramvya II, and Muramvya Vocational Technical School. All students and teachers were supposed to go to the stadium to welcome the President of the Republic and the Deputy Secretary General of CNDD-FDD, who were at the rally.

The ceremonies ended around 3:00 p.m. in an atmosphere of high desolation for the urban population, especially those who are not members of CNDD-FDD party.

##### **Women traders punished for supporting an independent candidate in Rugombo commune, Cibitoke province**

Information received by Ligue Iteka dated June 1, 2025, indicates that less than a week before the communal and legislative elections in Burundi, several women fruit traders were locked up on May 28, 2025, in CNDD-FDD party properties. The act, which lasted six hours, was a perceived political punishment for their participation in a rally of an independent candidate. The situation raised strong criticism in the run-up to the June 5 elections.

According to several local sources, this punishment was ordered in retaliation for their visible presence at the May 23, 2025 rally, which took place in the market parking. This situation reportedly greatly displeased CNDD-FDD party officials, who believed that the women traders, having received places thanks to CNDD-FDD party, were obliged to demonstrate their loyalty.

The economic impact of this measure was immediate and dramatic. Fruits such as pineapples, ripe bananas, tangerines, and oranges, left in the sun without any saleswomen or customers, rotted on the spot. "It's a great loss. I have loans to repay, and now I'm losing my merchandise for political reasons," laments a visibly outraged trader. These women denounce the political exploitation of their business. "We pay our taxes. There's no justification for imposing a party or candidate on us. It's a citizen's right to choose freely," asserts one of them, refusing to bow to pressure.

In addition to the confinement, the women traders were forced to wear uniforms with CNDD-FDD party's colors, a sign of enforced loyalty.

When contacted, the administrator of Rugombo commune, Gilbert Manirakiza, claimed to be unaware of these events. However, he maintained, without providing evidence, that "the political climate is calm" on the eve of the elections scheduled for June 5, 2025.



The women concerned are calling for the protection of their rights, respect for their political freedom, and a business environment free from partisan interference.

### **Partial market closure due to political mobilization**

Late in the afternoon of the same day, political activity continued in Nyaburumba quarter. This time, the head of Makamba central market, known as Fofana, was singled out. He allegedly ordered the closure of some market stalls so that traders participate in CNDD-FDD election campaign. This move was strongly criticized by some traders. "We're closing our stalls even though they're our only source of income, all for a rally we don't even want to attend," one of them denounced.

### ***III.2. RIGHT TO EDUCATION.***

#### **The interruption of school activities at ÉCOFO Kobero due to the election campaign in Muyinga province.**

According to our information, since the beginning of the election campaign in Muyinga province, a high attendance of students from different primary and fundamental schools has been observed. This was the case this Monday, May 27, 2025, when many students suspended their studies to participate in the CNDD-FDD Party's campaigning activities.

These students were first forced to wear the uniform of the ruling party. They were then organized into different groups called "Battalions." They then began parading to show the party's power, while chanting slogans that discriminate opponents. The students' parents issued an urgent appeal and expressed their outrage at this behavior. They also requested that these activities be adjusted so as not to disrupt the school curriculum.

#### **Disruption of school activities by education officials in Mwaro province.**

During this election period, some school officials are transmitting political ideas to students. They explain to them how to vote for CNDD-FDD party. In some schools, students are being pressured, with the implication that they will not return to class if they do not vote for CNDD-FDD.

For example, on Wednesday, May 28, 2025, the DCE of Nyabihanga commune, Léonard Maniratunga, visited several schools in this zone, accompanied by Mpangaje Vital, the head of the ruling party in Nyabihanga. At Ecofo Miterama, located in this commune, the DCE took the time to instruct students how to vote for CNDD-FDD by marking number 1 on the ballot.

According to local sources, he also stated that it would be difficult for those who did not vote for CNDD-FDD to return to school. Indeed, children have the right to a quality education that should focus on established curricula.

#### **School activities suspended in Nyanza Lac for a CNDD-FDD party rally**

On Monday, May 26, 2025, the secretary general of CNDD-FDD party organized a large rally at Nyanza-Lac communal stadium in Burunga province. This political event followed the visit of the President of the Republic to the same zone the previous week.

At dawn, the population of the three administrative zones of Nyanza commune, namely Vugizo, Mabanda, and Nyanza-Lac, gathered in large numbers. From at 8:00 a.m., enthusiastic crowds headed to the communal stadium, hoping to hear an inspiring speech promising real commitments.

However, the speaker did not arrive until around 3:00 p.m., after a prolonged wait under a scorching sun. This late arrival caused discouragement among the participants, many of whom were tired, hungry, and already exhausted from several hours of waiting.

One of the strongest criticisms among the population concerns the sudden suspension of school activities. According to local sources, students from schools in Nyanza-Lac urban center were required to cancel their exams to participate in this rally. This decision is considered worrying by many teachers and parents, who consider it as an obstacle to the smooth running of the school year and a typical example of excessive politicization of education.

### **Suspension of school activities for the election campaign in Makamba**

Beyond the messages deemed intimidating, concrete violations of the right to education have been reported. On May 21, 2025, in Makamba commune and Makamba province, students from Musasa and Kinoso primary schools were unable to attend classes. They were forced, according to witnesses, to participate in a CNDD-FDD activity organized on Nyabigina hill. While some were called upon to dance to liven up the event, others simply had to fill the crowds to demonstrate popular support.

"These children should have been in school that day, but they were sent to march for CNDD-FDD party. This is not normal," lamented a teacher contacted on site.

### **Lack of electricity and drinking water for residents of Muyinga commune.**

The city center of Muyinga has just spent a whole week without drinking water or electricity. The shortage of these Regideso products, essential conditions of life, has unfortunate and serious consequences on several levels:

In the economic domain at the household level; while some families use more than four cans of water a day, a can costs over 2,000 Bif, and they also need candles at night (they cost 2,000 Bif). Furthermore, some commercial services, including public secretariats, restaurants, and cafeterias, are paralyzed. Some use a lot of water, while others require electricity, particularly for milk conservation and other perishable products.

In the health sector, the population fears diseases related to dirt. Furthermore, the neonatology wards at Muyinga Hospital are no longer functioning, which can lead to the death of premature babies. It should be noted that with the widespread shortage of fuel oil throughout the country, the hospital is unable to power its generator, which is worsening the situation. The population is demanding that Regideso repair the outage as soon as possible, given the already significant losses.

Ligue Iteka strongly condemns the continuing deterioration of human rights in Burundi and denounces the impunity enjoyed by perpetrators of crimes. It urges the Burundian authorities to take concrete steps to address this situation. The following recommendations are made to the government:

- Establish a transparent and dynamic mechanism to adjust the purchase price of coffee based on the actual cost of production and the purchasing power of essential commodities, in order to ensure a decent income for farmers.
- Open independent and impartial investigations into all allegations of violence and intimidation, and bring those responsible to justice, regardless of their affiliation, to end impunity.
- Engage in constructive dialogue with all political forces, including the opposition, to ease tensions and restore confidence in the electoral process and institutions.

- Ensure that the electoral code is applied fairly and that the exclusions of some political actors are reviewed to ensure fair electoral competition.