



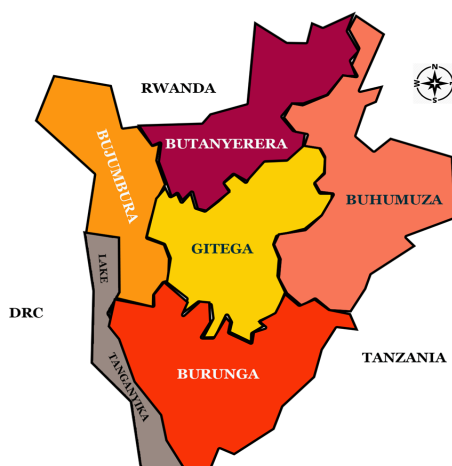
BURUNDIAN LEAGUE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS “ITEKA”

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Approved by Ministerial Statutory Instrument No. 530/0273 of November 10th, 1994, revising Order No. 550/029 of February 6th, 1991

*A report produced on the occasion of the
International Day of the Victims of
Enforced Disappearances, August 30th,
2025*

***IN BURUNDI, SERIOUS INTERCONNECTED VIOLATIONS:
KIDNAPPINGS, DETENTIONS IN SECRET LOCATIONS, TORTURE,
ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCES, AND SUMMARY EXECUTIONS.***



In memory of Mrs. Marie Claudette Kwizera, treasurer of the Iteka League, missing since December 10, 2025. From December 2015 to August 30, 2025, at least 841 victims of enforced disappearance were documented by the Iteka League, at least 91 victims reappeared and 750 are still missing. The UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances (WGDFI) has already communicated to the government of Burundi at least 252¹.

¹<https://docs.un.org/fr/A/HRC/57/54>

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

<i>API</i>	<i>: Agency for the Protection of Institutions</i>
<i>CNDD-FDD</i>	<i>: National Council for the Defense of Democracy – Forces for the Defense of Democracy</i>
<i>CNIDH</i>	<i>: National Commission for the Independence of Human Rights</i>
<i>CNIDH</i>	<i>: National Commission for the Independence of Human Rights</i>
<i>CNL</i>	<i>: National Congress for Liberty</i>
<i>ECOFO</i>	<i>: Elementary School</i>
<i>FRODEBU</i>	<i>: Front for Democracy in Burundi</i>
<i>GMIR</i>	<i>: Rapid Intervention Military Group</i>
<i>INDH</i>	<i>: National Human Rights Institutions</i>
<i>MSD</i>	<i>: Movement for Solidarity and Democracy</i>
<i>UN</i>	<i>: United Nations</i>
<i>DRC</i>	<i>: Democratic Republic of Congo</i>
<i>SNR</i>	<i>: National Intelligence Service</i>
<i>UPRONA</i>	<i>: Union for National Progress</i>

I.1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Burundian Human Rights League, “ITEKA,” highlights a crucial issue related to the deterioration of human rights in Burundi. This deterioration is still evident in the post-election context of the recent legislative and municipal elections and in the run-up to the 2027 presidential elections. This report by the Iteka League focuses on the seriousness of human rights violations that have continued since the 2015 political crisis, triggered by the controversial mandate of the late former president Pierre Nkurunziza. These violations mainly target opponents of the CNL and MSD parties, but also members of civil society and journalists. During Pierre Nkurunziza's mandate from 2015 to June 2020, reports indicated that 2,245 people were killed, 1,312 of whom were attributed to unidentified individuals, as well as 597 cases of abductions or disappearances attributable to the security forces and the Imbonerakure militia. Many of the bodies found are still not being investigated and are being buried by the authorities in violation of the laws in force².

This situation has continued even under the current regime of Evariste Ndayishimiye, as revealed in the report on his five years in office, published on August 4, 2025. Between June 2020 and June 2025, the Iteka League recorded 2,776 people killed (including 1,514 dead bodies, or 54.5% of those murdered), 231 kidnappings, 313 cases of torture, and 665 incidents of gender-based violence, 80% of which were sexual violence³.

The repression of any dissenting voices and the impunity of the perpetrators are two particularly obvious factors in the persistence of all these violations, including kidnappings, arbitrary detentions in secret locations, torture, and enforced disappearances, often attributed to state agents who are members of the National Inquiry Service (SNR), military inquiry agents, the police, and non-state agents acting under its protection, mainly the Imbonerakure militia, the militant youth on the side of the ruling party.

The situation is exacerbated by the dependence of the justice system, which is supposed to enforce the law and punish crimes. National human rights institutions (NHRIs), such as the OMBUDSMAN, whose leadership is appointed by the ruling party, and the CNIDH, which has seen changes in its commissioners after its president was forced into exile, illustrate this lack of independence. In this context, the Iteka League calls for proactive action to halt the deterioration of human rights in Burundi during this critical period characterized by authoritarian one-party rule, as evidenced by the results of the latest rigged elections, according to various actors, including the Catholic Church, in which the CNDD-FDD won more than 96% of the vote in the 2025 legislative and municipal elections.

This report places particular emphasis on the worrying scale of human rights violations before, during, and after the elections, focusing on enforced disappearances and the discovery of dead bodies.

²<https://lique-iteka.bi/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/RAPPORT-BILAN-AVRIL-2015-AVRIL-2020.pdf>

³<https://lique-iteka.bi/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/RAPPORT-BILAN-5-ANS-DE-GOUVERNANCE-DU-PRESIDENT-EVARISTE-NDAYISHIMIYE.pdf>

1.1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (the following of page 1)

In their actions, the perpetrators of these violations arbitrarily arrest or abduct the victims and, in secret, detain them in hidden locations. Others are killed outright and their bodies dumped in the countryside, hence the phenomenon of dead bodies being found here and there throughout the country, often showing signs of torture, wrapped in bags, with their hands tied, and wounds on their bodies.

As if that were not enough, to compound the pain of the relatives of the missing persons and to increase their anguish and fuel impunity, these lifeless bodies are quickly buried without any investigation and without allowing those who have lost their loved ones to come and see and verify whether it is their victim.

Through its observations, the Iteka League has documented thirty (30) cases of abductions throughout the country between January 1 and August 24, 2025. The thirty-one (31) cases of kidnapping recorded involved thirty-seven (37) identified victims. Of the two hundred and forty-seven (247) people killed, one hundred and thirty-nine (139) were killed by unidentified individuals and found dead.

This strategy of repression, focused on kidnappings, disappearances, summary executions, and dead bodies in different parts of the country, aims to stifle all forms of resistance or political dissent, thereby creating a climate of fear and uncertainty among the population.

This phenomenon goes beyond simple human rights violations, having profound consequences for social stability, community cohesion, and respect for fundamental rights in Burundi. To strengthen its control, the CNDD-FDD party continues to resort to enforced disappearances, often carried out during clandestine operations, making it difficult to count and officially recognize them, hence the interconnectedness of cases of enforced disappearances/abductions/detentions in secret locations/summary executions/bodies found.

Through a systematic investigation into violations in Burundi, the Iteka League observes that the increase in disappearances is justified by a climate of latent or supposed conflict, encouraged by the current government, as well as by impunity and the absence of transparent mechanisms to deal with these acts. The victims are often perceived as threats, generally from the opposition or civil society, but also civilians whose political affiliation is not known to the ruling party.

In this report, the Iteka League documents cases of enforced disappearances and bodies found between January and August 2025, highlighting the importance of continuing to document these facts, protecting survivors, and seeking justice for victims—a major challenge for both civil society and national and international institutions. This situation raises several issues, not only in terms of redress for victims and their families, but also in terms of holding those involved accountable, in order to prevent and eradicate injustices in the future.

⁴<https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gld=29857>

1.2. RECOMMENDATIONS

To the EU and other technical and financial partners of Burundi :

In light of the crimes that have continued throughout the decade and the risk of a deterioration in the human rights situation in the post-election period following the rigged 2025 legislative, municipal, senatorial, and collinaire elections and the 2027 presidential election :

- ♦ Review the conditions for granting financial support to this authoritarian government in order to encourage it to organize an inclusive dialogue involving all stakeholders to find a lasting solution to this political crisis;
- ♦ To fully support the renewal of the mandate of the UN Special Rapporteur and the opening of the Office of the High Commissioner of the UN Secretary-General in Burundi to closely monitor and prevent any deterioration in the tense climate between the entire opposition and the ruling party, the CNDD-FDD;
- ♦ Support human rights organizations, institutions, and mechanisms operating in Burundi.

To the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva :

Given the serious deterioration in the human rights situation and the imminent risk of renewed violence in the post-election period following the rigged 2025 legislative, municipal, senatorial, and collinaire elections and ahead of the 2027 presidential election:

- ♦ To renew the mandate of the UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation;
- ♦ Open the Office of the High Commissioner of the UN Secretary-General in Burundi to closely monitor and prevent any escalation in this tense climate between the entire opposition and the ruling party, the CNDD-FDD.

To the mandates of the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances; the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention; the Special Reporter on the situation of human rights in Burundi; the Special Reporter on extrajudicial, summary, or arbitrary executions; and the Committee against Torture:

- ♦ To continue to closely monitor developments in the human rights situation in Burundi;
- ♦ To collaborate fully with independent civil society organizations to provide early warnings to prevent the worst.

To the CNIDH :

- ♦ To conduct thorough investigations into enforced disappearances and the phenomenon of dead bodies, which has become commonplace throughout the country and generally shows signs of torture, in order to combat these crimes against humanity that leave indelible trauma in the hearts of the victims' family members.

To the government :

- ♦ To combat impunity by bringing all alleged perpetrators of crimes to justice; to restore the rights of all victims of observed human rights violations;
- ♦ To ratify the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance.

To civil society and NGOs

- ♦ To prioritize collaboration and coordination of actions to achieve objectives effectively and efficiently.

1.3.REPORT OBJECTIVES

1.3.1. General objective:

To contribute to the prevention of the deterioration of the human rights situation in Burundi during this post-legislative, communal, and hillside election period of 2025 and the pre-presidential election period of 2027.

1.3.2. Specific objectives:

- To assess the ongoing and concerning situation of enforced disappearances coupled with summary executions and torture as weapons of the authoritarian power of the CNDD-FDD party to silence any dissenting voices.
- To draw the attention of diplomatic missions accredited in Bujumbura, the EU, and the UN Human Rights Council to the ongoing nature of crimes against humanity that risks worsening with this authoritarian government stemming from the rigged legislative, communal, and hillside elections of 2025 and the preparation for the presidential election of 2027.
- Encourage the CNIDH to conduct thorough investigations into forced disappearances and the phenomenon of lifeless bodies that has become commonplace throughout the country, usually showing signs of torture, in order to combat these crimes against humanity that leave indelible traumas in the hearts of the victims' family members.

1.4. LEGAL FRAMEWORK IN BURUNDI REGARDING FORCED OR INVOLUNTARY DISAPPEARANCE

In Burundi, the legal framework concerning forced or involuntary disappearances is based on a set of legislative, conventional, and normative texts aimed at preventing, sanctioning, and remedying these acts. National legislation, particularly the Constitution and the Penal Code, strictly condemns any form of forced disappearance, classifying them as serious offenses liable to heavy prison sentences.

However, Burundi has not ratified the Convention for the Protection of all Persons from Enforced Disappearance, adopted by the UN in 2006, which imposes strict obligations on member states regarding criminalization, prevention, and investigation in cases of disappearance. The Convention also provides mechanisms for the reparation of victims, requiring states to respect the right to truth and justice. At the national level, the implementation of these commitments is often hindered by institutional gaps and a complex political climate. The independence of the judiciary and the ability of institutions to investigate impartially remain major challenges. The Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment, ratified by Burundi, also strengthens the legal framework by condemning any practices that may lead to disappearances, particularly in connection with arbitrary detention.

However, the ITEKA League emphasizes that the difficulty lies in the lack of political will and the effective translation of these texts into concrete actions by the Government of Burundi, which has adopted these methods as an operating mode and tools of repression in

I.4. LEGAL FRAMEWORK IN BURUNDI REGARDING FORCED OR INVOLUNTARY DISAPPEARANCE (the following of page 4)

a total impunity. Despite the efforts made by Burundi's partners through the training of judicial and police actors, in order to ensure their effective implementation and accountability, the road is still long. The Iteka League continues to emphasize the importance of strengthening these legal frameworks and ensuring their respect to prevent these violations and provide justice for the victims and their families.



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PART II : FORCED DISAPPEARANCE STATES AND DEAD BODIES FOUND IN BURUNDI FROM JANUARY TO AUGUST 2025.

II.1. ALLEGATIONS OF FORCED DISAPPEARANCES AND DEAD BODIES FOUND IN BURUNDI

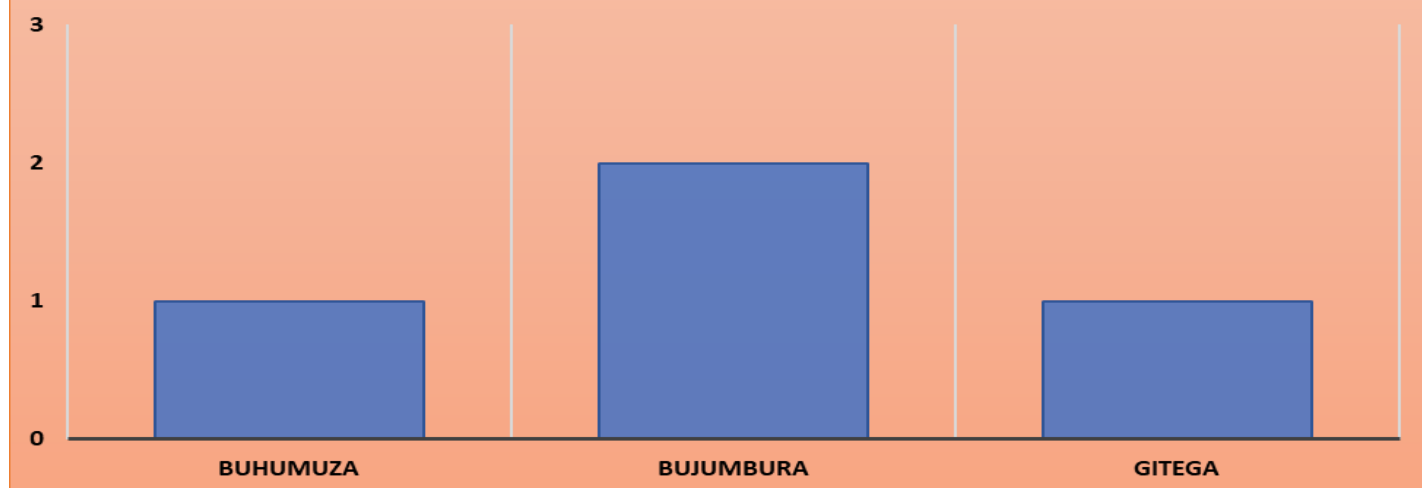
In Burundi, the increase in forced and involuntary disappearances since 2015 and continuing often targets political figures from the opposition, exacerbating impunity and making it impossible for the families of the missing to seek justice. This phenomenon also fosters distrust towards public institutions. Despite growing international awareness and reports denouncing violations by civil society organizations, it is crucial to establish strong legal mechanisms to combat these disappearances and targeted assassinations of which the bodies are found lifeless.

Disappearances or corpses found in Burundi occur through operations by state agents perceived as repressive measures, thereby reinforcing state control over the Burundian population. According to reports from the Iteka League, these situations also lead to targeted killings, plunging families into a traumatic state and uncertainty. Persistent impunity creates a climate of fear, weakening the social fabric. These disappearances are often viewed as involuntary; they reveal a glaring disregard for human rights, resulting in lasting repercussions for society. The international community calls for increased vigilance regarding these disappearances, for strengthened efforts in information gathering, and for the establishment of mechanisms aimed at clarifying these cases to ensure justice and prevent future violations.

II.1.1. ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCES AND ABDUCTIONS

In total, thirty (30) cases of abductions were recorded across the territory during the period from January 1 to August 24, 2025. Of the thirty (30) cases recorded, thirty-seven (37) people were listed as victims of abductions and/or enforced disappearances. The majority occurred in the province of Bujumbura with 23 cases resulting in 27 victims, followed by the province of Butanyerera with 2 cases resulting in 5 victims.

Kidnapped persons by province



Illustrative case of forced disappearances/kidnappings by the police

Example 1: On March 24, 2025, between 10:30 AM and 11:00 AM, in downtown Gitega, near the American Corner cultural center, 65-year-old retired Mfitiye Emmanuel, a member of the MSD party, was abducted by men in police uniforms and two others in the uniform of the Special Guard of Institutions (API). According to an eyewitness, these police officers, led by Venant Ndayishimiye, the provincial head of the SNR, were in a vehicle without license plates and with tinted windows. At the time this man was near his home, these officers came abruptly, took him and forcefully put him in the vehicle, which then took the Gitega-Bujumbura road. To this day, his relatives are wondering if the vehicle continued towards Bujumbura or if it returned to the documentation office in Gitega.

Ex2: On April 2, 2025, a person was kidnapped in Ntakangwa commune, province of Bujumbura Mairie, around 7 o'clock in the morning. The incident took place at the local market, commonly known as Kw'isamariro, located on the 15th transverse Maramvya, in the Buterere area, within Ntakangwa commune, Bujumbura municipality. The victim, Fidèle Nkurembone, an active militant of the pro-Agathon Rwasa CNL party, aged 46, and father of 7 children, resided on the 15th transverse.

He was brutally abducted by police officers, among whom was Athia Nduwimana, a police officer and an agent of the SNR. According to testimonies collected from several eyewitnesses present in the locality, it appears that the victim was heading towards the Kw'isamariro market, where he was pursuing his daily trading activities. A white double cabin Toyota vehicle, with tinted windows and registered BA049, was waiting for him.

Inside this vehicle, individuals dressed in police uniforms were located. One of them immediately pointed at Fidèle Nkurembone, and the kidnappers then rushed at him, violently snatching the keys to his stand and his backpack. They began beating him, and despite Fidèle Nkurembone's attempts to defend himself against this attack, he was forcibly taken away. The kidnappers took him to an unknown location, taking the direction of Bujumbura city .

It is important to mention that Fidèle Nkurembone was the right-hand man of Elie Ngomirakiza, who is the leader of the CNL party in Mutimbuzi commune and who was kidnapped on July 9, 2021, a kidnapping of which there has been no news since. According to the relatives of Fidèle Nkurembone, he had recently returned to the country in December 2024, after a stay in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, where he had migrated in 2022 in the hope of finding a job. Following his mysterious disappearance, his families and relatives have undertaken desperate searches in many places of detention in Bujumbura, but their efforts have unfortunately been in vain so far.

Fidèle Nkurembone's family is extremely concerned for his safety and well-being, fearing for his life in such conditions. The circumstances surrounding this abduction are particularly troubling, especially given the involvement of individuals in police uniform as well as a potential inquiry officer. This raises serious questions about the legality of these acts as well as the motivations behind such an unacceptable abduction.

Illustrative cases of enforced disappearance/abduction by SNR officers.

Ex 1: *On 22 March 2025 in Bujumbura, Dominique Ndikumana, a former employee of the Ministry of Education, was abducted by SNR agents. This incident raises serious concerns about the security of citizens and the methods used by the inquiry services.*

According to the accounts, Dominique Ndikumana, a resident of Nyakabiga III, 8th Avenue, in Mukaza commune, was heading towards the city center at around 16 a.m. to acquire Star Times units when he was intercepted at the exit of the bus by men in civilian clothes. They forced him into a tinted double cab van, without a license plate, which headed for Regina Mundi Cathedral.

Witnesses categorically identified the kidnappers as Burundian inquiry agents. Ndikumana's family is very concerned for her safety and well-being, fearing for her life.

Ex 2: *In January 2, 2025, in the Maramvya district, Ntahangwa commune, Bujumbura mayorship, Protais Ndayizeye, night watchman of the hardware store located in the Asian district belonging to the named David Uwimana residing in the Maramvya district, Ntahangwa commune, Bujumbura-mayorship was abducted by SNR officers on board a connected double cabin without a registration number. According to an eyewitness, the victim was apprehended at home by armed individuals in civilian clothes in a pick-up vehicle. Despite searches carried out in the various places of detention, no trace of Ndayizeye Protais has been found.*

Illustrative cases of enforced disappearances/abductions by Imbonerakure youth of the ruling party

Ex1: *On 21 April 2025, Christophe Masimo, treasurer of the CNL party in Mutimbuzi commune, Bujumbura province, was abducted from his rice field in Maramvya. According to local sources, a certain Gaddafi, Imbonerakure in Maramvya, approached him claiming to want to buy rice seeds. After obtaining his agreement, Gaddafi allegedly asked Christophe to follow him for payment. Since then, Christophe has not returned to his field or his home. His relatives and family, fearing for his safety and having sought him in vain, ask that this young Imbonerakure, Gaddafi, be brought to justice so that he reveals where Christophe is. Christophe resides at the 15th transversal in Maramvya. He is the second CNL member loyal to Agathon Rwaso to be kidnapped in this locality during the month of April. The first, Fidèle Nkorumbone, was abducted on 2 April 2025 by agents of the National Inquiry Service, including one Atia Nduwimana. Faithful remains untraceable to this day.*

Ex2: On March 23, 2025, at the roundabout of the Mukoni district, in the municipality and province of Muyinga, Schadrack Nkurunziza, aged 33, hairdresser from Nyakarama hill, Bugabira commune, Kirundo province, was abducted by three Imbonerakure who had put him in an TI vehicle registered CA 0444 belonging to a certain Basabose Antoine. According to local witnesses, the driver, nicknamed Kinyenyi, worked for Shabani Nimubona, leader of the Imbonerakure in Muyinga province, known for numerous human rights violations in that province. The vehicle took the direction of Gitega, but its final destination remains unknown. Family members express concern about the safety of their loved one until they have information about his or her place of detention.

Illustrative cases of enforced disappearances/abductions by the military

Ex1: A 44-year-old married father of three named Niyongere Eric was abducted. He lived in the Rango district, in the city and province of Gitega. According to our source, Niyongere Eric had recently returned to Burundi in early April 2025, after spending nine years in exile.

On Tuesday morning, April 20, 2025, residents of the Rango neighborhood noticed two pickup vehicles parked on a road, accompanied by military personnel moving along the lane. Several people, including Eric Niyongere, came out to see what was going on. According to the same source, the soldiers were circulating in the neighborhood, which led Eric to ignore that he was the target. Suddenly, soldiers forced him to kneel with their weapons before forcing him into one of the vehicles. Soon after, these soldiers left quickly with the two pickups, without anyone being able to identify them or intervene. They also took two mobile phones: Eric's and his wife's. Since then, no information has been released about where Eric was taken.

A friend of Eric's in the Scout movement indicates that some neighborhood and commune officials may be aware of the facts, but until now, the administrative and police authorities remain silent on this case. It has also been reported that such behaviour by the military is not common in this region. During searches or security operations, the police usually take the initiative. Since this event, Niyongere Eric's wife Bertine has remained completely silent and seems deeply affected. Our source adds that Niyongere Eric had no history of conflict or known problems in the community.

Illustrative cases of enforced disappearances/abductions by unidentified persons

Ex1: On 24 July 2025, the Iteka League received information concerning the disappearance of Claver Bakundukize, a 42-year-old policeman assigned to the General Inspectorate of the National Police, located in Ngagara. The latter disappeared on July 9, 2025. Originally from Ndago hill in Buraza commune, Gitega province, he lived in Buyenzi camp, also known as the 1st GMIR. A former member of the Ex-FAB, he had integrated into the ranks of the police following the reforms carried out.

By early July Claver had taken a week off to return to his native hill. He was scheduled to return to Bujumbura on 9 July to resume his duties. That day, Claver left Gitega, but he never arrived at his destination. His attempts to contact him by telephone received no response. On July 10, the family, increasingly alarmed by the situation, tried to reach him many times, but without success. The anxiety grows within the family of Claver Bakundukize, who fears that he was the victim of a criminal act on the road between Gitega and Bujumbura.

Ex2: On 3 June 2025, Théophile Niyimbona, former director of the Ruseseka communal high school, activist and former deputy of the CNL party, Agathon Rwasa's wing, was abducted from the school's premises. According to witnesses, a vehicle without a "Jeep" type plate arrived, and men got out to seize it by force and embark it. His family and CNL party members still do not know where he was taken. Although Théophile Niyimbona recently joined the CNDD-FDD party, the reasons for his arrest remain unknown. Of particular concern is that former CNL members appear to be targeted, especially those who apply for voter cards without being CNDD-FDD members.

The former secretary general of the CNL, loyal to Agathon Rwasa, strongly denounced these arbitrary arrests and intimidation. He called for respect for the right of every citizen to vote freely, without fear or pressure, and called for an end to these practices of intimidation against Burundians.

Ex3: Information received by the Iteka League on 18 August 2025 indicates that on 17 August 2025, at the Rusengo market in Ruyigi commune, Buhumuza province, a woman known as Maman Salah was abducted by unidentified persons. According to local sources, the woman, a mother of five, was loaded into a white Toyota double cab van without a registration number. The victim was abducted on 17 August 2025 when she was at the Rusengo market in Ruyigi commune.

Note that this woman lives on Nyamutobo hill in the same commune of Ruyigi. According to the same sources, this woman was found five days after her disappearance in Kayanza commune, Butanyerera province, near the building of the former governor of Kayanza province. After 5 days of searching for the victim, her family learned that she would be detained in one of the houses in the capital of Kayanza commune.

After arriving in Kayanza town, they learned that she is being kept in one of the houses near the above-mentioned house when they approached, they saw a vehicle with tinted glasses coming out of the gate with someone inside the same vehicle screaming for help and chased the vehicle on a motorcycle.

The vehicle took the road towards Ngozi commune. Arrived about 5 kilometers from the town of Kayanza, they opened the door of the vehicle and dropped the victim on the ground because they noticed that there are people who are chasing them using a motorcycle. The victim's face was bandaged. The family recovered theirs but were in critical condition as a result of the torture they suffered.

She is currently hospitalized at Rema Hospital in Ruyigi, her home province. Family conflicts would be behind this abduction. One of his family members, known as Muverema, has been arrested for investigative reasons and is currently in jail at Ruyigi Provincial Police Station.



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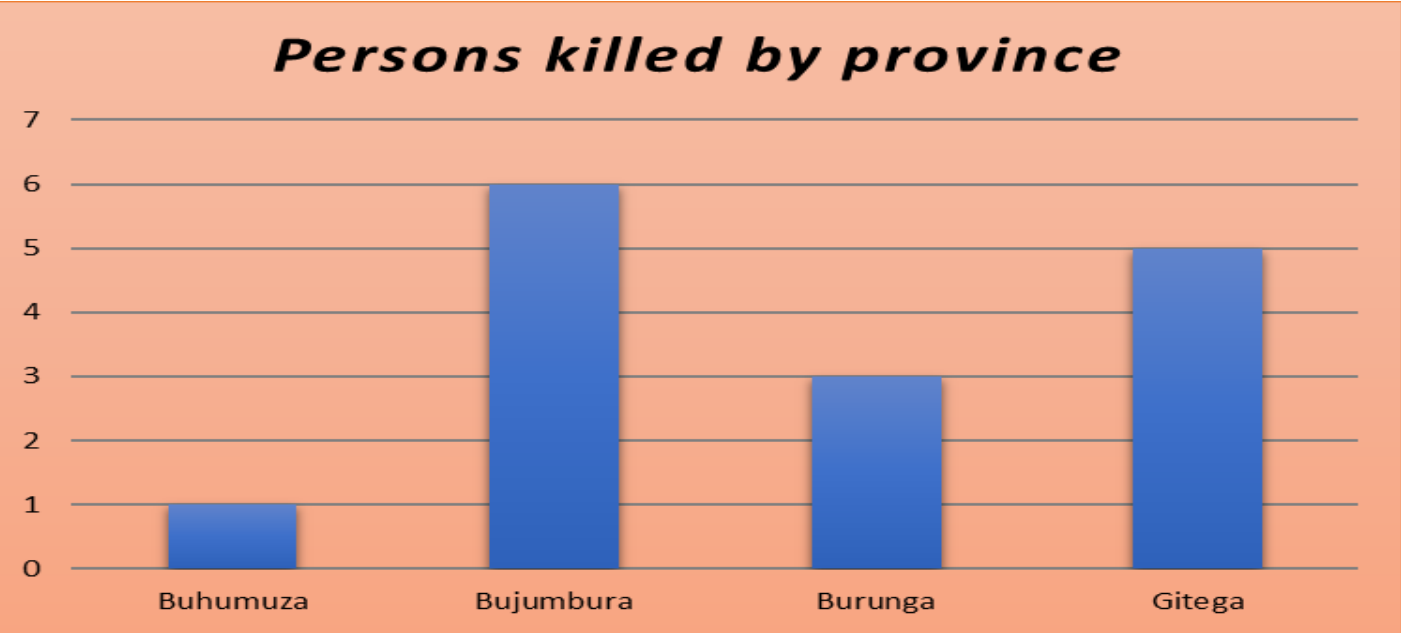
II.1.2. LIFELESS BODIES FOUND

The phenomenon of dead bodies found in Burundi without justice is a common, recurring and worrying problem, as highlighted by the Iteka League in its detailed reports published earlier. Often these tragic victims are killed in extreme conditions and their bodies are dumped in isolated places where they are neither identified nor recognized. The administrative authorities and the Imbonerakure promptly bury these bodies without following the appropriate legal procedures, which constitutes a flagrant violation of article 109 of the Code of Criminal Procedure. This article clearly stipulates that in the event of the discovery of a body whose death is suspicious and enigmatic, the Judicial Police Officer has the obligation to inform the Public Prosecutor immediately before examining the scene of the discovery. If he or she fails to contact the Prosecutor as soon as possible, he or she must visit the premises and prepare a report, which must be transmitted without delay to the competent authority. In addition, the prosecutor can also travel to the scene and be assisted by qualified experts to determine the exact circumstances of this death. If, after all these investigations, there are still grey areas or uncertainties concerning the cause of death, a formal investigation must be opened to clarify this tragic situation, whether or not the offence has been conclusively proven.

During this year, the Iteka League recorded a total of 247 people killed throughout the country between 1 January and 24 August 2025. Of these two hundred and forty-seven (247) people killed, one hundred and thirty-nine (139) people are killed by unidentified people and found dead.

As illustrated by this graph below, Bujumbura province including the municipalities of Cibitoke, Bukinanyana, Bujumbura,... recorded more victims with 43 victims followed by Gitega province with 32 victims, in third place comes Buhumuza with 25 victims.

II.1.2. LIFELESS BODIES FOUND



Illustrative cases:

Ex 1: *Maniratunga Jean, aged 36, married and father of three was found on the evening of Sunday, June 08 at about 5:30 pm hanging from a rope, in front of the door of his house located on Masango hill (former commune of Mutaho), currently of the Gitondo zone, extended Bugendana commune.*

Our source who visited the scene said the body had small wounds to his arms and back, prompting residents to wonder if he might have been killed elsewhere and then hanged to suggest suicide. Mutaho Police Commissioner Nshimirimana Denis and Masango Hill Chief Nyecumi Pierre called in an ambulance from Mutaho Hospital around 7 p.m. to transport the body to the mortuary. Our source claims that the deceased was buried on Tuesday morning without any investigation because the doctor said that the autopsy was not necessary.

According to the same source, the victim had no family conflict and was not visible to any political party.

Ex2: *On February 10, 2025, a lifeless body of Charles Karikurubu, UPRONA member, a 61-year-old military pensioner who had just retired once again from ETS Kiryama where he was a driver, originally from Gwego Kiryama area hill in Matana commune of Burunga province was found in a swamp at the bottom of Kiryama Secondary Technical School on Kiryama area Kiryama hill in Matana commune, Burunga province.*

According to witnesses, the victim had disappeared 2 weeks ago and his body was found with an arm almost completely cut off and many wounds to his head. He was buried on the same day at Mwungu Cemetery on Kiryama Hill by his family under the orders of Songa Communal Administration since this body was already decomposing. But after the funeral his wife was directly arrested by the police. The perpetrators of this crime are not known.

Ex3: *On March 29, 2025, a lifeless body of an as yet unidentified man in his thirties, decapitated with a machete, was found on the 9th transversal of Rusiga Hill, near the provincial office and the Nyamagana River, not far from a position erected in this locality by the members of the young Imbonerakure, zone, cibitoke commune, Bukinanyana province.*

According to an eyewitness, his new motorcycle, found intact at the scene, suggests that the murder could be linked to an attempted robbery gone wrong. However, many residents suspect the involvement of the young Imbonerakure, who are regularly cited in similar cases.

According to a security source, the man was killed less than 500 meters from the provincial office and not far from the Nyamagana River. The law enforcement forces, alerted to this discovery, immediately launched an investigation. The body was transferred to the morgue of the Cibitoke hospital, while the police authorities are urging the public to collaborate in identifying those responsible.

Witnesses gathered at the scene highlight that the Imbonerakure youth are often mentioned in similar cases, including recent murders in the region. A local source insists that these youths would be involved, especially since the crime occurred near their established positions on the banks of the Rusizi River, at the border with the DRC.

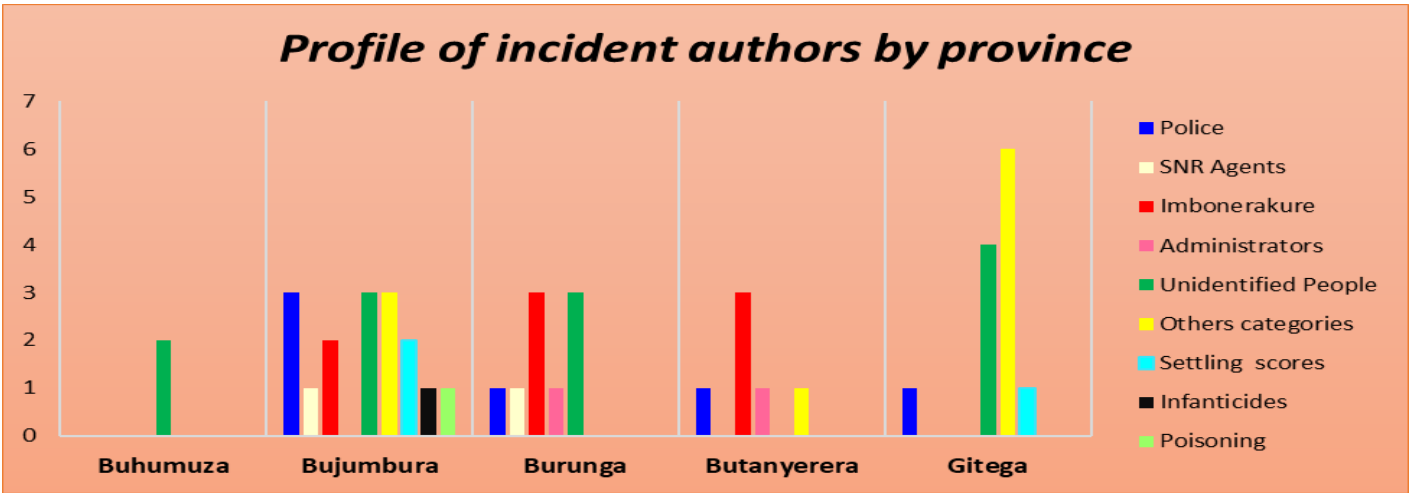
The residents, concerned about the resurgence of these acts of violence, are calling on the authorities to conduct thorough investigations and ensure safety in the region.

II.1.3. ACTORS INVOLVED IN CASES OF FORCED DISAPPEARANCES/ KIDNAPPINGS IN BURUNDI

The actors involved in enforced or involuntary disappearances in Burundi encompass several categories, each playing a decisive role in the context of these violations. The security forces and the army are often seen as direct perpetrators, being directly involved in operations of illegal detention or kidnapping, sometimes in execution of missions related to national security according to the CNDD-FDD party and its ruling government or in the fight against the opposition. Their involvement is reinforced by an often fragile legal framework, where impunity limits accountability and facilitates these behaviors.

State actors, whether military or police, Imbonerakure sometimes act on the margins or in violation of laws, under orders or within the framework of general policies aimed at eliminating opponents or supposed enemies. Furthermore, some political actors, particularly figures close to power, have been able to encourage or tacitly tolerate these acts, creating a climate of fear and control.

During the period of this report, the Iteka League documented a total of 37 victims of abduction from January 1 to August 24. Most of these abductions were committed by: police 11 cases, 10 cases by unidentified individuals, 2 cases by military, 3 cases by Imbonerakure, and 5 cases by SNR agents.



Civil society, local and international NGOs play a crucial role in denouncing these disappearances and providing support to the victims or their families. Their mobilization helps to shed light on abuses, but their actions often face repression or neglect from authorities.

Finally, the international community, through agencies such as the UN or other organizations, sometimes intervenes as an observer or by proposing measures to pressure state actors into accountability. The complexity of these dynamics reflects the magnitude and seriousness of the phenomenon, while highlighting the importance of cooperation and collective responsibility to effectively address it.

VIII. CONCLUSION

The persistence of enforced or involuntary disappearances and bodies found in Burundi has left a deep imprint on society, with devastating effects both individually and collectively. These practices, often perpetuated in a context marked by prolonged conflicts, have fragmented the social fabric, fuelled mistrust and fuelled a cycle of fear and silence. Families of victims bear a heavy emotional burden, haunted by the absence of their loved ones and uncertainty about their fate, which exacerbates their pain and sense of injustice.

This state of affairs is thus manifested in a total silence of the authority eager to safeguard its power at any cost, while in the biological and political families of the victims, stigmatization grows in the wake of disappearances, accentuating the isolation of alleged or real victims and complicating any attempt at national reconciliation. Psychologically, direct and indirect victims experience lasting trauma, often with irreversible consequences for their mental well-being and ability to rebuild their lives. Civil society has organized to denounce these abuses and demand justice, mobilizing NGOs and the media to draw attention to the scale of the phenomenon.

However, the institutional response remains insufficient, despite the establishment of public policies and protection measures, which still need to be strengthened to prevent further disappearances and ensure accountability. The data collected, at the statistical level, confirm the seriousness of this problem.

To respond effectively to this crisis, the Iteka League reiterates its view that it is essential to implement far-reaching structural reforms, involving the international community with enhanced support, in order to establish the truth, do justice and establish lasting peace. Ending these violations requires a collective commitment, aimed not only at reparation for the victims, but also at rebuilding a society based on transparency, justice and respect for the rights of all.