

BURUNDI HUMAN RIGHTS LEAGUE 'ITEKA'

Approved by Ministerial Ordinance No. 530/0273 of November 10, 1994,
amending Ordinance No. 550/029 of February 6, 1991

REPORT OF THE BURUNDIAN LEAGUE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS "ITEKA" ON THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN BURUNDI FOR THE PERIOD FROM JANUARY TO MARCH 2026



Anyone should be respected

In memory of Madam Marie Claudette Kwizera, treasurer of the Iteka League, missing since December 10, 2015. From December 2015 to March 29, 2026, at least 861 victims of enforced disappearance have been documented by the Iteka League, at least 86 victims have reappeared, and 777 victims are still missing. The UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances (WGEID) has already communicated to the Government of Burundi at least 252 victims.

The Iteka League:

- ♦ "Is a member of the Inter-African Union for Human and Peoples' Rights (UIDH), is an affiliated member of the International Federation for Human Rights Leagues (FIDH),
- ♦ has observer status with the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights under reference number OBS.236 and is a member of ECOSOC.
- ♦ is decentralized into 17 federations and 32 sections."

¹<https://docs.un.org/fr/A/HRC/57/54>

THE NEW ADMINISTRATIVE MAP OF BURUNDI

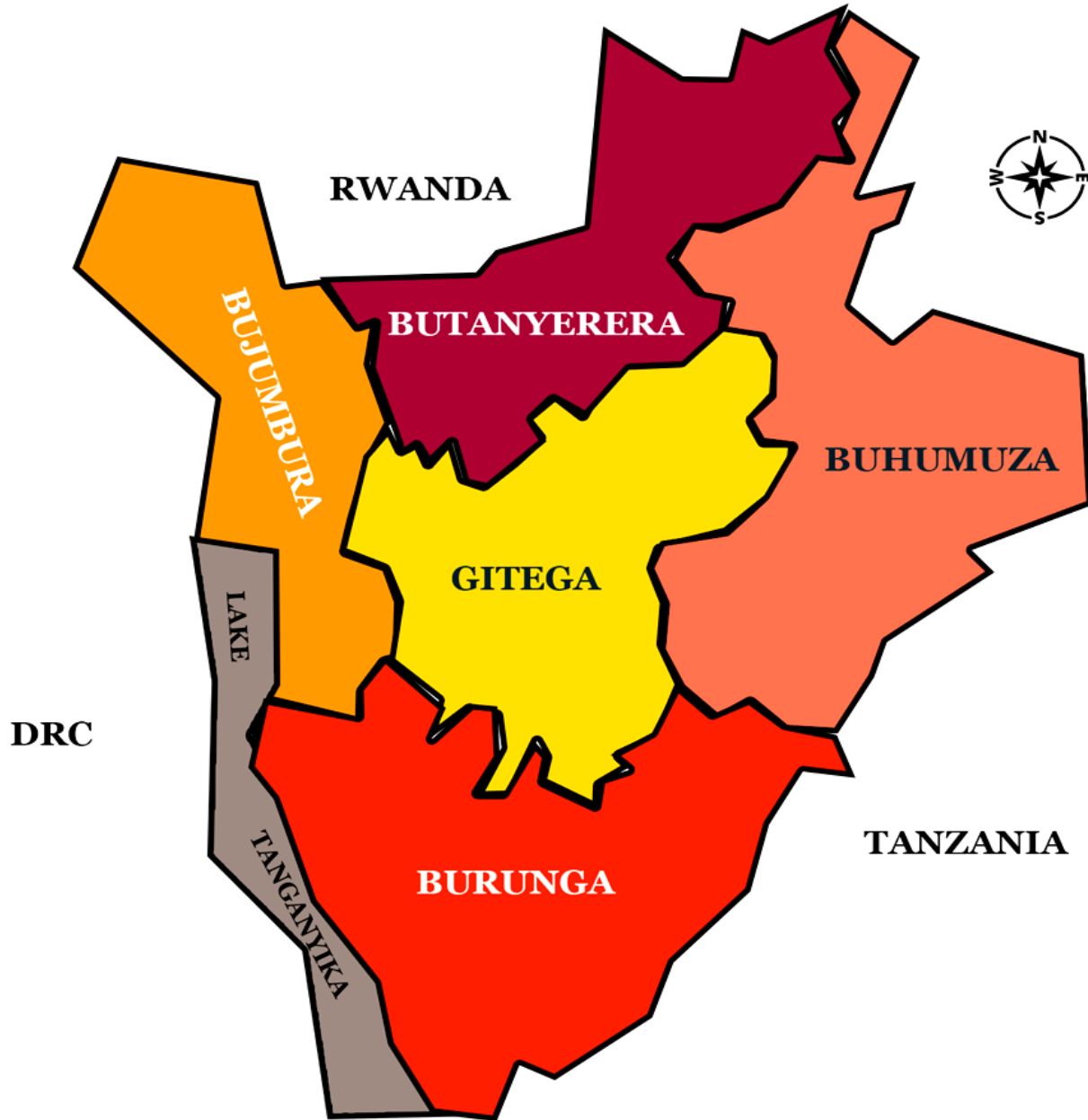


TABLE OF CONTENT

<i>ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS.</i>	4
<i>I. BRIEF PRESENTATION OF THE REPORT</i>	5
<i>II. ALLEGATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS</i>	8
<i>II.1. CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS</i>	8
<i>II.1.1. RIGHT TO LIFE</i>	8
<i>II.1.1.1. VOLUNTARY HOMICIDES</i>	8
<i>II.1.1.2. ABDUCTED AND/OR MISSING PERSONS</i>	11
<i>II.1.1.3. RIGHT TO PHYSICAL INTEGRITY</i>	13
<i>II.1.1.3.1. TORTURE, CRUEL, INHUMAN OR DEGRADING PUNISHMENTS OR TREATMENTS</i>	13
<i>II.1.1.3.2. GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE / RAPE</i>	16
<i>II.1.2. RIGHT TO FREEDOM</i>	18
<i>II.1.2.1. ARBITRARY ARRESTS</i>	18
<i>II.2. SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL RIGHTS</i>	20
<i>II.2.1. DISRUPTION OF ECONOMIC LIFE</i>	20
<i>II.2.2. RIGHT TO EDUCATION</i>	20
<i>II.3. RIGHTS TO HEALTH</i>	21
<i>III. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS</i>	23

ACCRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AGNU: United Nations General Assembly

CDP: Council of Patriots

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

CNL: National Congress for Liberty

UPRONA: Union for National Progress

DESC: Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

FRODEBU: Front for Democracy in Burundi

PNB: National Police of Burundi

SNR: National Enquiry Service

TGI: High Court

RDC: Democratic Republic of the Congo

M23: March 23 Movement

FDLR: Democratic Liberation Front of Rwanda

VBGs: Gender-Based Violence

CENI: Independent National Electoral Commission

CEPI: Independent Provincial Electoral Commission

CECI: Independent Communal Electoral Commission

VB: Voting Office

ECOFO: Fundamental School

OPJ: Judicial Police Officer

I. BRIEF PRESENTATION OF THE REPORT

This report on the human rights situation in Burundi from January to March 2026 also examines civil and political rights, as well as social, economic, and cultural rights. The report concludes with a summary and recommendations.

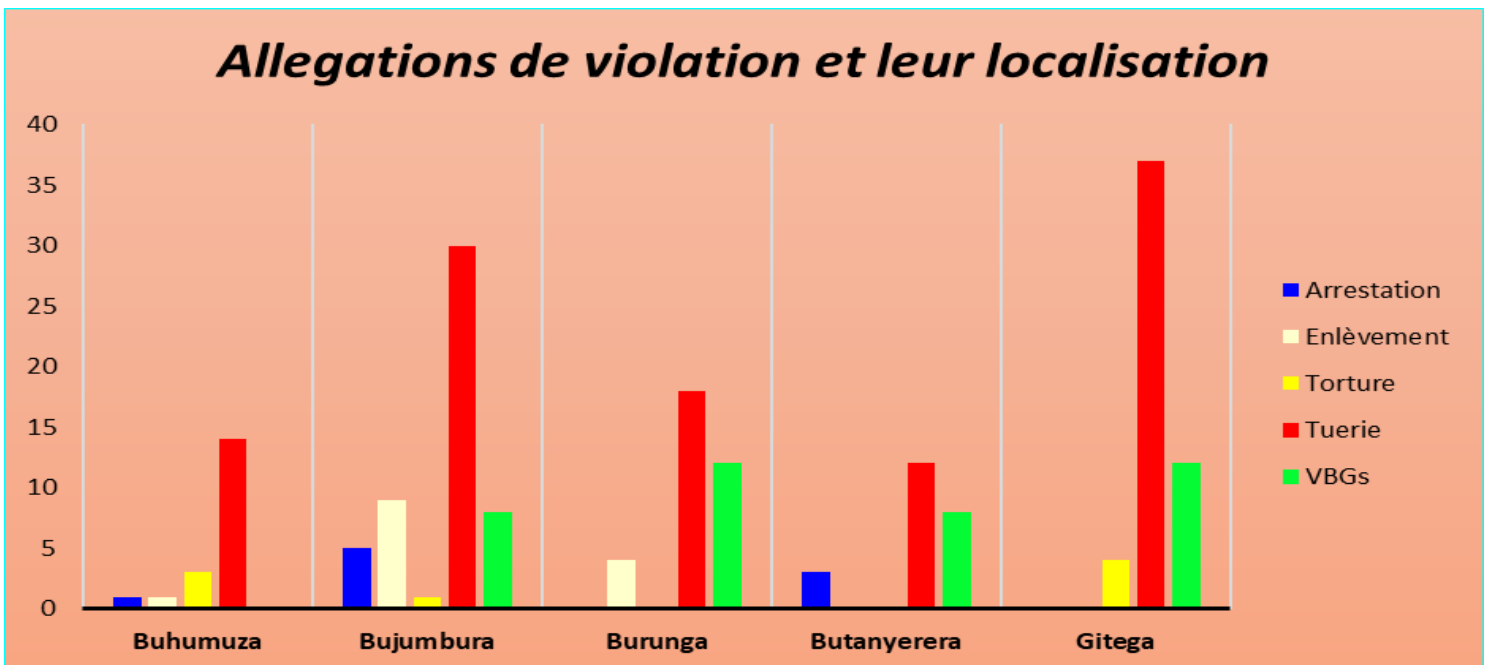
Thus, the human rights situation has deteriorated alarmingly: at least 111 people were killed, of whom 60 bodies were recovered; among those killed, 86 were men and 25 were women. Among the victims, 40 suffered gender-based violence, including 30 cases of sexual violence against minors; the victims included 38 women and 6 men. Other statistics include 8 people who were subjected to cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment, 14 people who were abducted or reported missing, and 9 who were arbitrarily arrested.

Although the political affiliation of the majority of the victims is unknown, it should be noted that members of political parties were not spared, including those of the ruling CNDD-FDD party: 6 killed, 2 abducted, 8 victims of gender-based violence, and 3 tortured.

Accusations have also been leveled against members of the Imbonerakure militia, administrative officials, members of the SNR, and police officers, who are considered the primary perpetrators of the reported human rights violations and murders.

Figure 1 : Graph illustrating the main cases of human rights violations observed in Burundi during the period from January to March 2026

Location of the incident / Province	Number of victims					Total
	Arrest	Abduction	Torture	Killing	GBV	
Buhumuza	1	1	3	14	0	19
Bujumbura	5	9	1	30	8	53
Burunga	0	4	0	18	12	34
Butanyerera	3	0	0	12	8	23
Gitega	0	0	4	37	12	53
Total	9	14	8	111	40	182



I. BRIEF PRESENTATION OF THE REPORT (the following of page 5)

Of the 182 victims of alleged violations documented during the first quarter of 2026, 111 were killed, 40 were victims of gender-based violence (GBV)—30 of whom were victims of sexual violence—8 were subjected to cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment, 14 were abducted, and 9 were arrested.

The provinces of Bujumbura and Gitega rank first with 53 victims each, including, for Bujumbura, 30 people killed, 1 case of torture, 8 victims of sexual and gender-based violence, 9 victims of abduction, and 5 people arrested and illegally detained. The province of Gitega recorded 37 killings, 12 victims of SGBV, and 4 cases of torture.

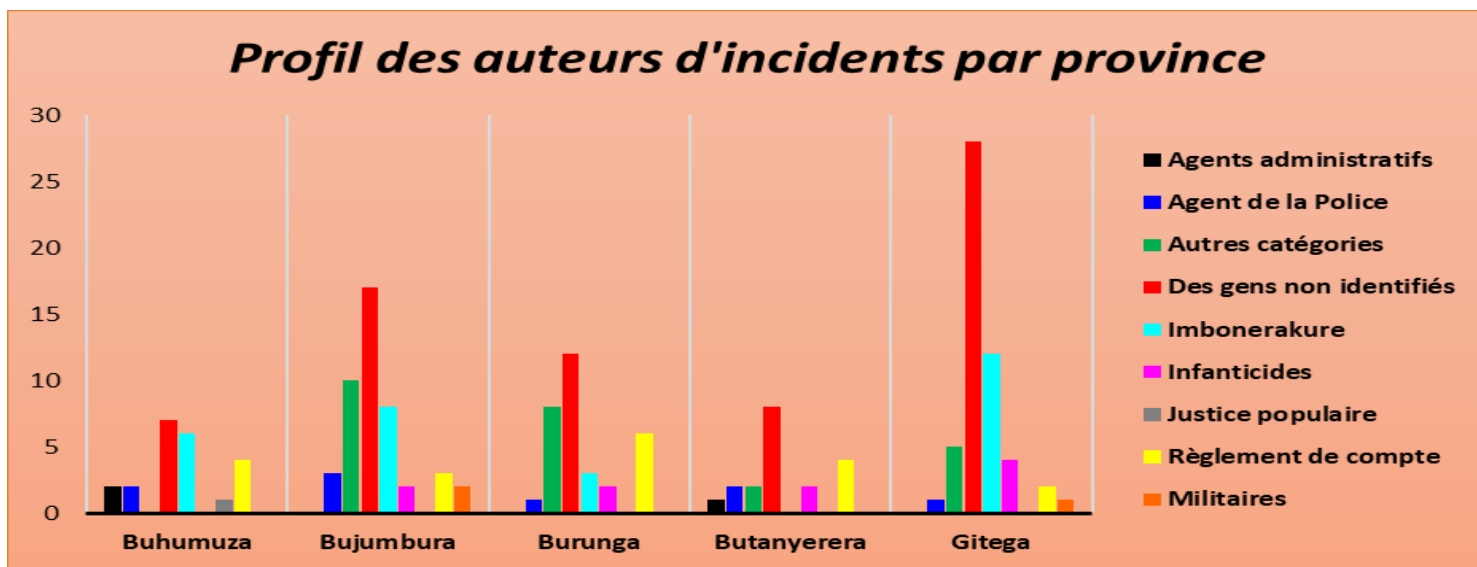
The province of Burunga ranks second with 34 victims of violations, comprising 18 killings, 12 victims of SGBV, and 4 cases of abduction,

Fourth is Butanyerera Province, which recorded 23 victims, including 12 people killed, 8 victims of GBV, and 3 people arrested.

Buhumuza Province ranks last, with 19 victims, including 14 people killed, 3 victims of torture, 1 person abducted, and 1 person arrested.

Figure 2: Chart illustrating the main authors of human rights violation allegations observed in Burundi during the period from January to March 2026

Province	Administrative Agent	Police Officer	Other Catégories	Unidentified People	Imbonerakure	Infanticides	Popular Justice	Settling Scores	Military
Buhumuza	2	2	0	7	6	0	1	4	0
Bujumbura	0	3	10	17	8	2	0	3	2
Burunga	0	1	8	12	3	2	0	6	0
Butanyerera	1	2	2	8	0	2	0	4	0
Gitega	0	1	5	28	12	4	0	2	1
Total	3	9	25	72	29	10	1	19	3



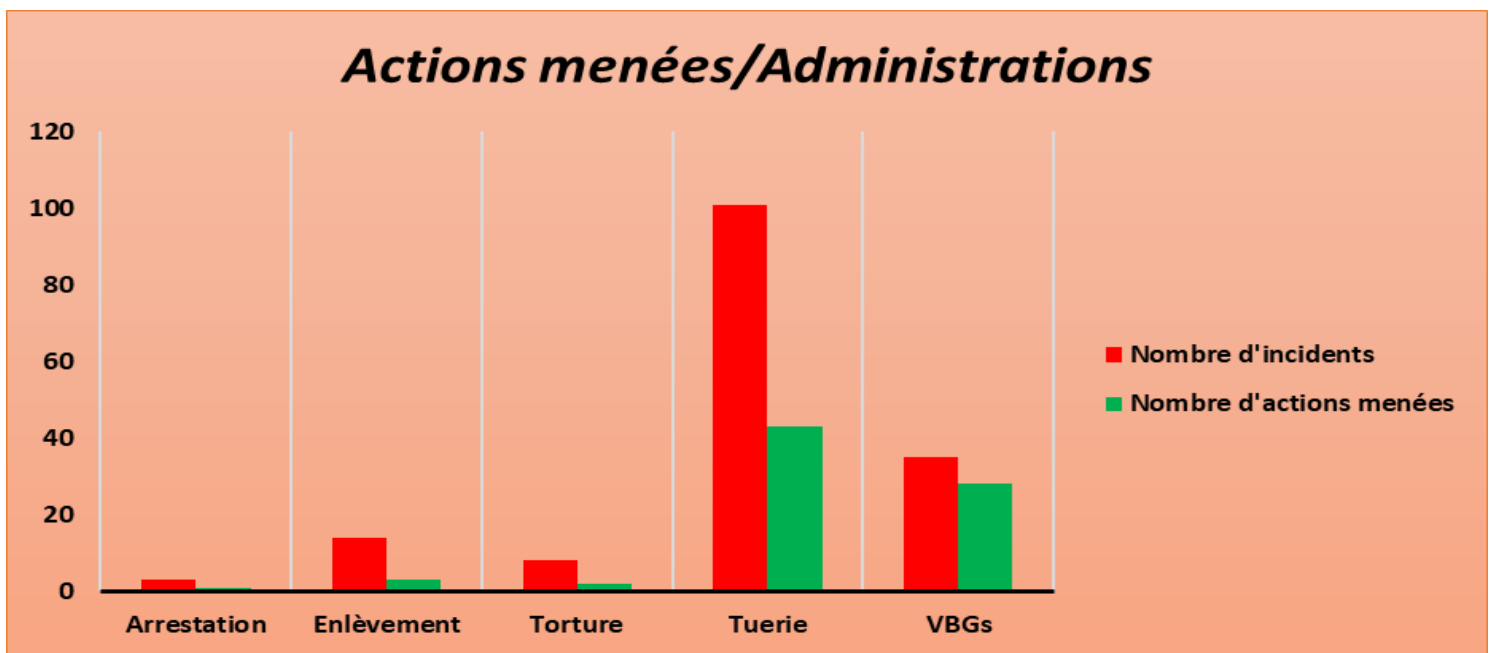
Out of a total of 182 documented victims, 161 incidents of violations were recorded during the reporting period. 72 cases were committed by unidentified individuals, 29 cases by Imbonerakure, 9 cases by police officers, 25 cases by other categories (ordinary citizens, including traders, Popular Justice, infanticides, poisonings). Administrative agents with 3 cases, SNR (11 cases), Military (3 cases), settling of scores (19 cases), Infanticide with 10 cases, and 1 case of Popular Justice.

I. BRIEF PRESENTATION OF THE REPORT (the following of page 6)

Figure 3: Graph illustrating the main actions taken by administrative agents as solutions to committed violations

Of the 161 incidents recorded during the period under review, 77 actions were implemented, divided into three main groups, in order to provide solutions. Some incidents were resolved, while others are still being processed, with investigations underway to identify the most appropriate solutions.

Types of Incident	Number of Incidents	Number of Taken Actions	No action
Arrest	3	1	2
Abduction	14	3	14
Torture	8	2	6
Killing	101	43	58
VBGs	35	28	7
Total	161	77	84



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II. ALLEGATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

II.1. CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS

Burundi is among the countries adhering to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1965) and its Optional Protocol (1976) without any reservation on May 9, 1990, which, within the framework of its implementation, Burundi has taken measures in domestic legislation, notably in its Constitution of June 7, 2018 (Main 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 Code of Criminal Procedure of May 11, 2018, and other institutions for the protection of human rights have been created in Burundi.

II.1.1 RIGHT TO LIFE

II.1.1.1. VOLUNTARY HOMICIDES

The law guarantees it; human dignity must be respected and protected by the State, and in the event of a violation, sanctions should be applied to the alleged perpetrators, Article 21 of the country's constitutional law.

During the period under consideration, the Iteka League documented 101 cases of killing across the territory. Out of a total of 111 people who lost their lives, 93 were adults and 18 were children.

The most affected provinces are Gitega and Bujumbura with 37 and 30 cases respectively, followed by Burunga with 18 victims, Buhumuza with 14 victims, and finally the province of Butanyerera with 12 cases. These alarming figures reveal a lack of political will to protect human rights in Burundi.

Figure 4: Chart of people killed by unidentified individuals, killed by state agents, killed as a result of settling scores, killed as a result of vigilante justice, killed as a result of infanticides and other child murders.

Province	Cases of Killing	Number of victims		Men	Women
		Killing	Lifeless bodies		
Buhumuza	14	11	3	9	5
Bujumbura	24	15	15	28	2
Burunga	15	5	13	11	7
Butanyerera	11	6	6	8	4
Gitega	37	14	23	30	7
Total	101	51	60	86	25



II.1.1 RIGHT TO LIFE (the following of page 8)

Illustration case:

Committed by the Police

Ex1: On January 17, 2026, at around 11 p.m., a law enforcement officer shot and killed a civilian on Gakungwe Hill, in the Ramba area, within the municipality of Mugere, Bujumbura Province. The officer in question was assigned to guard the DIFO microfinance office, located on that hill along National Road RN3. At that time, a resident of Ramba Hill named Eric was walking home after having a drink in Ruziba. When he reached the officer's position, the officer stopped him. A confrontation ensued, as both individuals were intoxicated. It was then that the officer opened fire on Eric, who died from his injuries. The victim's funeral is scheduled for January 19, 2026. The victim's family demands that the officer responsible for the shooting be identified, held accountable for his actions before the courts, and punished in accordance with applicable law.

Committed by Imbonerakure youths

Ex2: On the night of Friday, January 23, 2026, a group of Imbonerakure carried out a grenade attack against the family of Ntadugira Isaac and Macumi Anne Marie and their children, who are from Bihogo Hill in the Gasorwe area of Musinga commune.

According to information gathered at the scene, they were seriously injured, and one of their children had a leg amputated. Other victims were rushed to Rusimbuko Hospital but were later transferred urgently to Ngozi, where their mother, Anne Marie, succumbed to her injuries. The others are still receiving treatment there.

Our sources reveal that two of these Imbonerakure namely Harongintore Salathiel and Ndaruzaniye both accused of these crimes, are in custody in the Gasorwe Zone jail and have pleaded guilty, while the other, named Toto Arnaud, managed to escape.

Finally, it is important to note that some sources claim this family was accused of witchcraft by two local merchants. These merchants had recently lost their mother and claimed that this family was responsible for her death. Others assert that these Imbonerakure were paid by the two merchants to commit these despicable acts.

Ex3: A lifeless body found in Mugina commune, Bujumbura province The nineteenth day of February 2026 was fatal for Ciza, a forty-year-old from Nyempundu, Nyamakarabo zone, Mugina commune.

In circumstances that the administration or the police have not elucidated through an investigation, the victim Ciza was tortured before being killed. This murder was allegedly planned a few days before and committed on Wednesday, February 18, 2026 when the victim was returning from Gikomero, a center on Nyempundu hill.

Our sources report that, regarding this latest murder in the border area, members of the Imbonerakure who are known to be delinquent and often involved in hunting down people crossing the river to enter or leave Rwanda are being blamed by the local population for carrying out this murder. They feared that the victim, who used to work in the fields near the Ruhwa River, would expose them to the army or the police. The authorities had been investigating for several days people involved in thefts and the smuggling of gold and coffee into Rwanda, and on this hill, only the Imbonerakure are known to be involved in such crimes, and the victim knew some of them. Against the backdrop of strained relations stemming from security conflicts in the region involving Burundi and Rwanda, the population of Mugina particularly those in the border areas with Rwanda is calling on the President of the Republic, recently appointed Chairperson of the African

II.1.1 RIGHT TO LIFE (the following of page 9)

Union, to take action to reopen the borders in order to jointly safeguard security between the DRC, Rwanda, and Burundi, as the movement of rebel groups notably the FDLR's Interahamwe and the presence of smugglers and traffickers have consistently spread fear and caused casualties in these areas

Ex4: Information received by the Iteka League on February 4, 2026, indicates that a tragedy with serious judicial and human consequences occurred on January 28 on the hill and in the Buhindo area, Cibitoke commune, in Bujumbura province.

Jean-Pierre Ntahiraja, 40 years old and father of four children, died in the area jail after being violently apprehended in the context of a marital conflict. The case has stirred strong indignation among the population and reignited the debate on abuses during arrests.

According to several consistent local sources, the events took place while the victim was going through a period of marital tensions with his wife. Two young Imbonerakure, known by the nicknames Ndakurasa and Kazoviyo, reportedly intervened at the family home. They allegedly carried out a forceful arrest of Jean-Pierre Ntahiraja, tying him up and subjecting him to violent blows and injuries.

Seriously injured and unable to speak, the man was reportedly then taken to the cell in the Buhindo area, without any medical assistance being provided to him. The next day, he was found dead in his cell, before any medical care could be given.

Family indignation and judicial follow-up

Alerted, the victim's family went to the scene, expressing anger and despair. Relatives reportedly tried to attack the two Imbonerakure involved, who fled before their arrival.

Questioned by the authorities, the police officer in charge of guarding the cell stated that the victim had been brought to him without any explanation about the circumstances of his arrest or his critical health condition. Following the initial investigations, this police officer was taken into custody for failing to assist a person in danger. The victim's wife, involved in the marital conflict that led to the intervention, was also arrested in connection with the investigation.

The deceased's family, supported by neighbors, demands the immediate arrest of the two fleeing Imbonerakure and their prosecution, so that the exact circumstances of this death can be fully clarified.

According to local sources, the administrator and communal commissioner of Cibitoke, Éloge Najeneza, stated that the communal administration is working closely with the police and judicial authorities. He asserts that all individuals involved in this criminal act will be identified, apprehended, and prosecuted in accordance with the law.

While awaiting the outcome of the investigation, this tragedy revives concerns about respect for human rights, excessive use of force, and detention conditions in certain areas of the country.

II.1.1.2. ABDUCTIONS AND/OR MISSING PERSONS

Article 38 of Burundi's Constitutional Law guarantees every individual the right to a fair trial and to have their case heard and decided within a reasonable time. Nevertheless, on the ground, alarming irregularities in this regard are evident.

During the first quarter of 2026, from January to March, the Iteka League observed a grim picture of disappearances. The data, presented in the table and graph below, indicate that at least 14 people were abducted or reported missing. The province of Bujumbura was particularly affected, with 9 victims recorded, followed by Burunga where 4 people went missing, and finally Buhumuza with a single victim. Investigators point the finger, in one case, at the Imbonerakure, while for the other 13, those responsible are believed to be unidentified individuals, likely linked to the Intelligence Service, given the difficult circumstances surrounding the incidents. Among the victims of this tragedy are 4 women and 10 men.

Figure 5: People kidnapped and/or missing in Burundi from January to March 2026

Province	Cases of kidnappings	Number of victims	Men	Women
Buhumuza	1	1	1	0
Bujumbura	9	9	7	2
Burunga	4	4	2	2
Butanyerera	0	0	0	0
Gitega	0	0	0	0
Total	14	14	10	4

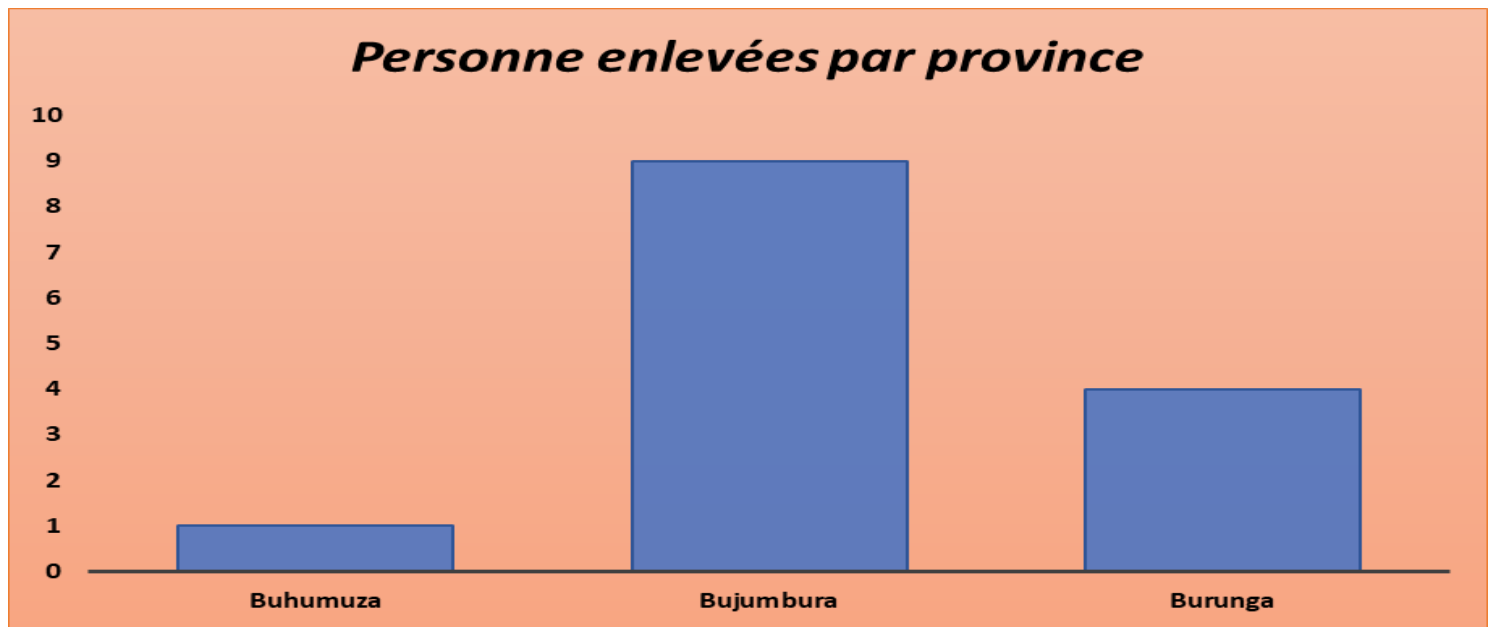


Illustration case:

Committed by the Young Imbonerakure

Example 1: Since January 1, 2026, on Murama hill and area, Muyinga commune, Buhumuza province, Rukundorwimana Egide, son of Nikonarusanze Fabien and Ngendamubansi Marie, husband of Kabagabire Emelyne from Mugongo hill, Kamara area, Butihinda Commune, has been missing.

II.1.1.2. KIDNAPPINGS AND/OR MISSING PERSONS (the following of page 11)

According to witnesses from the locality, on this date, the victim called his wife saying that he is threatened, asking for a sum of 20,000F via the Lumicash number 69278819 of Hatungimana Vincent, Imbonerakure from Ryabihira Hill, Murama Zone, Muyinga Commune, Buhumuza Province, to be released.

The family of the missing person resorted to the chief of Murama zone who followed the matter and, by calling this Imbonerakure, who answered that he is with him and that there is no problem. Since then, she has not returned and the family of Egide Rukundorwimana has no more traces of him. They ask the police to arrest this Imbonerakure, who is currently moving around without concern, and bring him to justice to answer for this disappearance.

Committed by Unidentified People

Ex2: On Monday, March 23, 2026, around 10 a.m., in the Nyakabiga 1 neighborhood, located on 4th Avenue in the Mukaza commune, Bujumbura province, Ciza Bogoss, 28 years old and an electronic equipment repairer (radios and phones), was forcibly apprehended by individuals wearing national police uniforms.

According to local witnesses, the victim was in the company of other residents in a public area and was forced to get into a double-cabin vehicle, which immediately left the scene for an unknown destination.

According to testimonies collected from neighbors and the family, this abduction occurred in a climate of pre-existing tensions. A dispute had opposed the victim to his neighbor, Jean de Dieu, also known as "Gisukari".

This conflict, initially of a private nature, escalated following insults directed at Ciza's mother, leading to a physical altercation between the two parties. It is important to emphasize that this neighborhood case was already the subject of proceedings before the competent judicial authorities at the time of the events.

The involvement of individuals in official uniforms in what appears to be a kidnapping raises serious concerns about the misuse of law enforcement in private disputes. The family and residents of Nyakabiga denounce a violation of legal arrest procedures and fear for Mr. Ciza's physical integrity.

The victim's relatives are requesting the intervention of administrative and security authorities to locate the young man, ensure respect for his fundamental rights, and guarantee a transparent handling of this case in accordance with the principles of the rule of law.

Ex3: Information received by the Iteka League on February 24, 2026, indicates that since February 22, 2026, Eric Cubwa, 50 years old, a well-known figure in Nyanza-Lac, has been missing. His family, without any news, denounces a kidnapping and calls on the authorities to shed full light on this matter. The victim, a trader and active member of the fishermen's committees in Kabonga, disappeared under troubling circumstances. Originally from Kabonga Hill, Kabonga area, Nyanza commune, Burunga province, he is the father of 15 children and married to two wives, one living on Kabonga Hill and the other in the Mayengo neighborhood, at the communal chief town.

A former combatant demobilized after the 2005 war, and a member of the CNDD-FDD party, he was locally recognized for his outspoken nature, even criticizing governance within the CNDD-FDD, and his commitment to defending the interests of fishermen, a vital sector in this lakeside region of Lake Tanganyika.

II.1.1.2. KIDNAPPINGS AND/OR MISSING PERSONS (the following of page 12)

According to testimonies from his family, on February 22 around 7 p.m., a pickup truck with tinted windows, without a license plate, stopped in front of his home. Unidentified individuals took him away without providing any explanation, before disappearing in an unknown direction. Relatives have made multiple démarches with local administrative authorities and police services, but no clear information has been communicated to them. Anxiety is growing within the family, who claim to have had no news since that day.

At this stage, administrative and police authorities have not yet spoken publicly about this disappearance.

II.1.2. RIGHT TO PHYSICAL INTEGRITY

The right to physical integrity is protected in Burundi by several constitutional and legislative provisions, as well as by international commitments. The Constitution of Burundi guarantees the right to life, freedom, and personal security. It prohibits torture, cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment. The Burundian Penal Code punishes infringements on physical integrity, including intentional violence, assault and battery, as well as sexual assault.

II.1.2.1. ALLEGATIONS OF TORTURE, CRUEL, INHUMAN OR DEGRADING PUNISHMENTS OR TREATMENTS

Figure 6: Persons tortured or subjected to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment during the period from October to December in Burundi

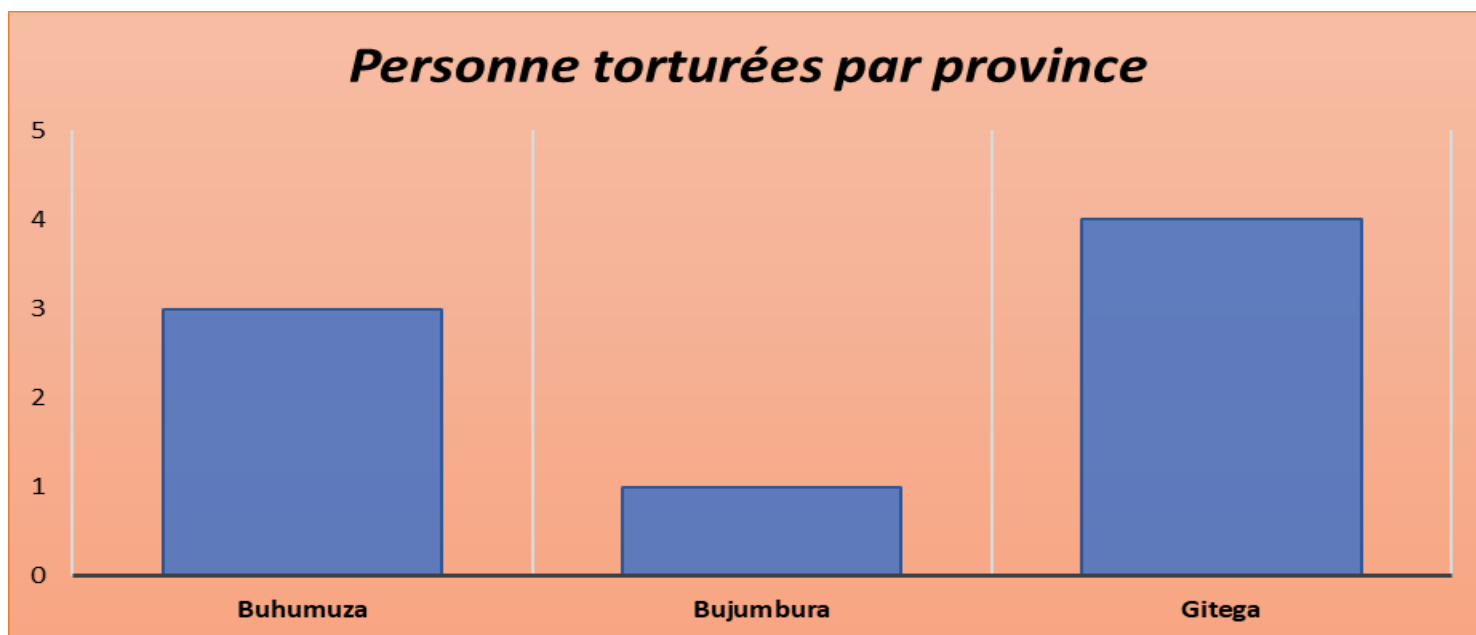
In total, eight individuals were subjected to torture or cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment throughout the territory during the period covered by this report. As illustrated by the graph and table below, the Iteka League recorded 8 cases of people subjected to acts of torture or cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment during this quarter. The most affected provinces proved to be Gitega, with 4 cases, followed by Buhumuza, with 3 cases, and finally Bujumbura, with 1 case. It should be noted that among the victims are ordinary citizens as well as members of the CNDD-FDD. Regarding the perpetrators of acts of torture or cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment, 4 cases are attributed to the Imbonerakure, the youth of the ruling party, while 2 cases are attributable to police officers. All victims are men.

Province	Cases of torture	Number of victims	Men	Women
Buhumuza	3	3	3	0
Bujumbura	1	1	1	0
Burunga	0	0	0	0
Butanyerera	0	0	0	0
Gitega	4	4	4	0
Total	8	8	8	0



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II.1.2. RIGHT TO PHYSICAL INTEGRITY (the following of page 13)



Illustrative examples:

Committed by the Police

Ex1: On Tuesday, February 3, 2026, at Rwamura Hill, a motorcycle driver named BIZIMANA Pierre, who was coming from the Shinge market, encountered a group of men in police uniforms. One of the officers raised his hand to signal him to stop, but he did not obey because the area is located within Ruvubu National Park, and he believed they were bandits, as many people had already been robbed of their belongings in that area.

After realizing that the motorcyclist had refused to stop, the officer threw a large stick at him; he lost his balance on the motorcycle and fell into a ditch. The two other officers, who had been hiding near the road, began beating the motorcyclist with sticks until he lost consciousness, accusing him of disobeying orders. The motorcyclist was taken to the Kigamba municipal hospital, but because his condition was critical, he was transferred to Cankuzo Hospital, where he is currently being treated in the intensive care unit.

In this area, police officers routinely stop motorcyclists and drivers coming from the Shinge market, and sometimes they force them to pay money.

The Shinge market is a market for large and small livestock and is held every Tuesday. The police officers who committed this act are MURENGERANTWARI Alfred, RIVUZUMWAMI Jean Bosco, and BUHIGI Thaddée, all from the Kigamba municipal police station.

The general public, and motorcycle and car drivers in particular, are calling on police officials in this commune to restore discipline among their officers, as they have a habit of demanding money from drivers without valid reason and without providing a receipt.

Ex2: A motorcycle driver was mistreated by a police officer in Mwaro commune, Gitega province. On March 4, 2026, around 10 a.m., in the main town of Mwaro commune, Gitega province, a motorcycle taxi driver named Hakizimana was at the loading dock of a store that sells cement.

According to sources on the spot, his motorcycle was next to him and a policeman from the Mwaro Provincial Police Station named Berchmans with a motorola on his belt, came and forcibly took this motorcyclist by the neck to force him to give him the ignition key of his motorcycle. This motorcyclist started by shouting for help, but afterwards, he was no longer able to get out even his

II.1.2. RIGHT TO PHYSICAL INTEGRITY (the following of page 14)

voice because the policeman was strangling him hard at the neck.

Since Wednesday is the only market day throughout the week in Mwaro commune, suddenly a crowd of people near the store, those going to or coming back from the market, gathered to ask about the reason for this disagreement. That is how the policeman left the scene, but with a very angry look since the motorcyclist had refused to give him the key to his motorcycle, instead demanding that the policeman check the motorcycle's documents.

Those who were there criticized the policeman's behavior, stating that even if this motorcycle driver had committed an offense, he would not have treated him that way because the motorcyclist could have died by strangulation.

Some information says that this policeman Berchmans is of the Twa ethnicity and everywhere he had been before being transferred to Mwaro, he had the habit of mistreating people.

Committed by young Imbonerakure members

Example 3: On Wednesday, February 4, 2026, on the Nyamugari hillside, Rusagara Hill. Kigamba Zone, in Buhumuza Province, a certain MAJAMBERE Fidèle fell into an ambush set by criminals around 8:00 p.m. as he was returning from the center of Kigamba, located in the capital of the Kigamba Zone (formerly the commune of Kigamba).

Upon reaching a point about 50 meters from his home, the victim was ambushed, and the assailants struck him with machetes on the head, face, neck, etc. These criminals had been hiding in a thicket of eucalyptus trees in the area belonging to a certain Ferdinand. The assailants fled after committing the crime because local residents intervened after hearing the victim's screams.

Fidèle Majembere was taken to the Kigamba Municipal Hospital, where he is currently receiving treatment. Among the criminals, the victim was able to identify a man named NDUWIMANA Calixte, who was arrested the following day. He is currently being held in the Kigamba Zone detention center, where an investigating officer is processing his case. The alleged perpetrator has a history of being implicated in similar crimes.

It should be noted that Calixte Nduwimana is one of the leaders of the Imbonerakure youth group in this neighborhood. As for the victim, he does not belong to any political party, but prior to 2015, he was an active member of the MSD party in the Kigamba commune and was one of the party's leaders in the Rusagara neighborhood. The Imbonerakure youth are being singled out because they are the ones conducting night patrols in this area. The population is asking the administration and security forces to ensure their safety.

Ex 4: On the night of February 21, 2026, in the Sanzu III neighborhood of Ruyigi commune, in Buhumuza province, Clovis Kwizera, a resident of the same neighborhood, was beaten by young Imbonerakure members, including Isaïe Nsengiyumva, the Imbonerakure leader in the Sanzu neighborhood, Jimmy, Eliudi, and Claude, who accused him of staying open past the closing hours of his kiosk.

Clovis Kwizera is currently hospitalized at Ruyigi Hospital in room number 12 of the internal medicine ward.

None of the perpetrators have been arrested so far, and the residents of the Sanzu neighborhood are demanding that justice be served, especially since this is not the first time these Imbonerakure have been implicated in this type of abuse.

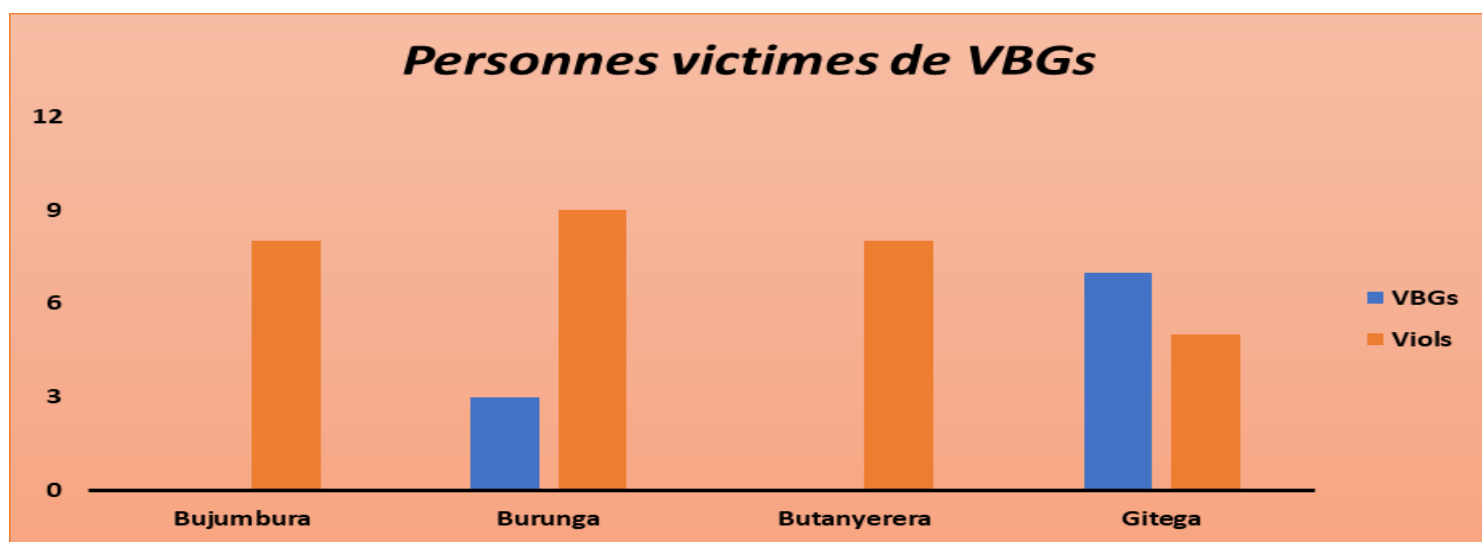
II.1.2.2. GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE/SEXUAL ASSAULTS

The Law on Gender-Based Violence adopted in Burundi in 2016 represented a major advance. It ensured better protection, notably by providing a definition of rape that takes into account the issue of consent and by prohibiting harmful traditional practices.

During the period covered by this report, cases of gender-based violence (GBV) were observed at an alarming rate. The Iteka League recorded a minimum of 35 cases of GBV, resulting in 40 victims nationwide. Among these 40 victims, 30 are children who suffered rape and 10 are adults who are victims of GBV. As shown in the graph below, the provinces of Burunga and Gitega stand out at the top with 12 cases each, followed by the provinces of Bujumbura and Butanyerera with 8 cases each. Among the victims, there are 39 women and 1 man.

Figure 7: Graph of people who are victims of gender-based violence

Province	Cases of GBV	Number of victims		Men	Women
		GBV	Rape		
Buhumuza	0	0	0	0	0
Bujumbura	6	0	8	0	8
Burunga	12	3	9	0	12
Butanyerera	7	0	8	0	8
Gitega	10	7	5	1	11
Total	35	10	30	1	39



Illustrative examples:

Committed by police officers

Ex1: Information received by the Iteka League on March 23, 2026, indicates that on March 20, 2026, a young girl T.N from Rorero hill, Kabarore zone, Kayanza commune, Butanyerera province, was raped by a police officer Nzambiana Édouard, 40 years old, who operates in this Kabarore area.

The information gathered from the victim's parents, Mpawenimana Sereverin and Ciza Speciose, states that their neighbor Miburo Consolatte was an accomplice because she called the victim to her home and locked her in with the alleged perpetrator of this rape. Nzambiana Édouard and Miburo Consolatte were apprehended by the police on the same day and taken to the police station lock-up in Kayanza.

II.1.2.2. GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE/RAPES (the following of page 16)

Committed by young Imbonerakure members

Ex2: On January 20, 2026, on Rwuya Hill, in the Mbuye Zone of Muramvya Commune, a 14-year-old girl was raped. K. A., an eighth-grade student at Ecofo Rwuya, was assaulted by a motorcyclist named Niyokindi Richard, aged 32, a member of the Imbonerakure of the CNDD-FDD. The incident occurred around 7:00 p.m., as the victim was returning home after delivering some notebooks to a schoolmate. She encountered this man, who offered her a beer at the Rwuya trading center, located about 500 meters from her home. He then offered her a ride, but instead of taking her home, he deviated from the usual route. Upon reaching a bush, he threatened her to submit to his advances and raped her. After the assault, he left her near her home, and she reported the incident to her parents. The next day, her parents took her to the Rwuya health center, where medical examinations confirmed the assault. According to local sources, when the suspect learned he was being sought, he fled and remains at large to this day.

Ex3: According to information received by the Iteka League on January 22, 2026, between January 10 and 14, 2026, three girls aged 7 to 12 were victims of sexual violence in the Rusenda and Masango hills, in the Bukinanyana commune, Bujumbura province. Two weeks after the incidents, the families report threats, pressure, and a climate of impunity that hinders access to justice, even though the victims are all children in highly vulnerable situations.

According to local sources, two of the victims were reportedly attacked while gathering firewood, while the third was allegedly assaulted on her way home from school. Although the children received medical care, the alleged perpetrators were not held accountable for long, with some fleeing and others released after their arrest.

The families, who come from disadvantaged backgrounds, report facing intimidation intended to dissuade them from pursuing legal action. This situation fuels fear and silence, in flagrant violation of children's fundamental rights, particularly the right to protection from all forms of violence, as guaranteed by national and international conventions.

Neighbors denounce persistent impunity and call on judicial authorities to act firmly. They demand independent investigations, protection for the victims and their families, as well as effective prosecutions against the alleged perpetrators.

Beyond these cases, this matter reignites the debate on the State's responsibility to ensure a safe environment for children. Delivering justice for these minors means not only punishing the guilty, but also asserting that the protection of the child must take precedence over any social or political consideration.



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II.1.3. RIGHT TO FREEDOM

II.1.3.1 ARBITRARY ARRESTS

International and National texts in Burundi recognize the principle of innocence until proven guilty, and that detention should be an exception.

During the period examined in this report, the Iteka League noted a total of 9 cases of arrest, including 8 men and 1 woman. The individuals suspected of being involved in these arrests are police officers, who are responsible for 2 of these cases, as well as young members of the Imbonerakure league, involved in another case. Among the provinces, Bujumbura stands out as the one that recorded the most incidents, with 5 victims, followed by Butanyerera with 3 victims. Finally, Burunga, which had 1 victim.

Province	Cases of arrest	Number of victims	Men	Women
Buhumuza	1	1	1	0
Bujumbura	1	5	4	1
Burunga	0	0	0	0
Butanyerera	1	3	3	0
Gitega	0	0	0	0
Total	3	9	8	1

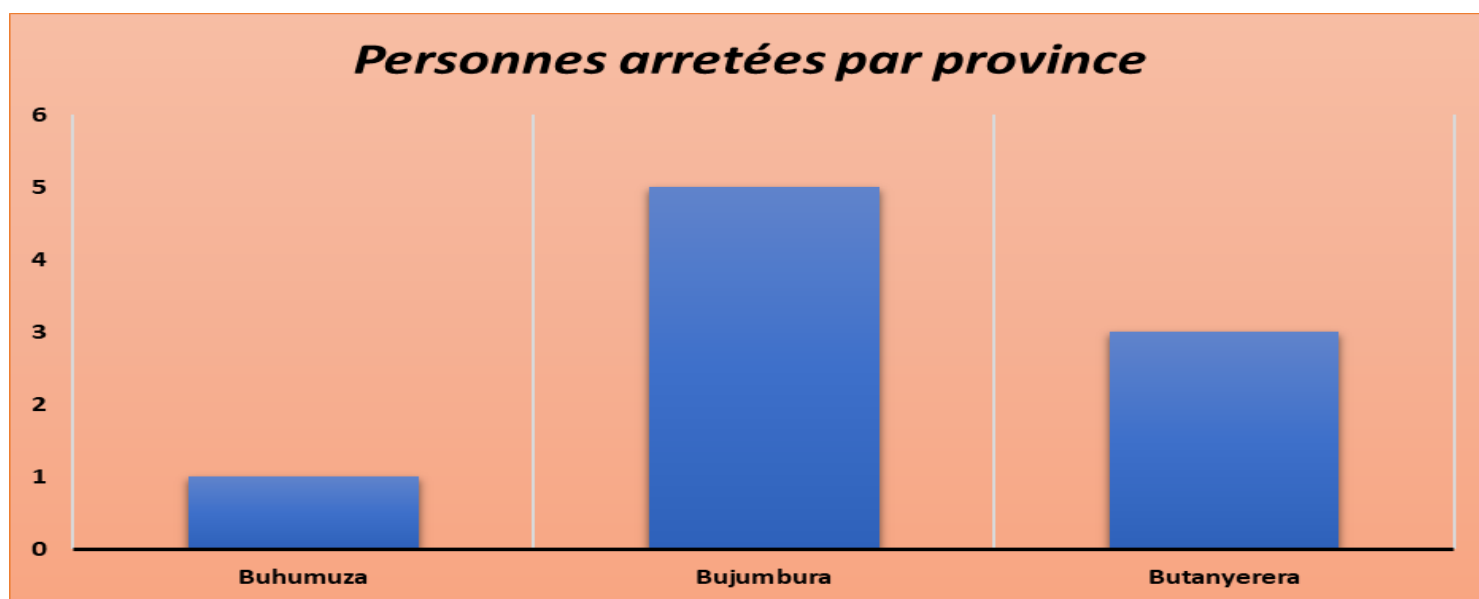


Illustration case:

Ex1: Since February 18, 2026, two journalists known as Olivier Manirambona and Aline Niyonizigiye, a camerawoman and breastfeeding mother, from the magazine Jimbere, have been detained in the cells of the Ngagara area, in Bujumbura province.

According to sources on the ground, these journalists were arrested by the Ntahangwa prosecutor's office while they were going to follow up on the execution of a 21-year-old land dispute, entrusted to the Ntahangwa High Court, located in the north of the city of Bujumbura, the economic capital of Burundi.

The two journalists were detained along with one of the parties to the conflict, Siméon Ngenzebuhoro, a former deputy. On Thursday, February 19, 2026, the three detainees appeared at an urgent hearing, which was postponed to Friday due to the absence of a lawyer for Ngenzebuhoro. The magazine Jimbere wrote to the Ntahangwa prosecutor to request the release of its journalists, but has received no response to date.

II.1.2.1 ARBITRARY ARREST(the following of page 18)

A Jimbere official, along with other media professionals in Burundi, denounce this arbitrary arrest, recalling that its journalists broke no law and were simply performing their role as independent informers. The detention of Aline Niyonizigiye, separated from her child, is considered particularly unacceptable and contrary to the fundamental rights of women and children.

On the same date, three other journalists were arrested and held for more than 8 hours by the National Intelligence Service (SNR) in Bujumbura, while covering the visit of Hadja Lahbib, European Commissioner in charge of Equality, Preparedness, and Crisis Management. Questioned within the grounds of the Burundian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, they were taken to SNR cells before being released around 9 p.m. These independent journalists are: Nitanga Tchandrrou, Papy Amani, and their driver.

As of February 20, 2026, the two journalists from Jimbere magazine were also released on a provisional liberty extension order by the prosecutor at the Ntahangwa Court of Appeal, Eraste Ndayiragije; he stated that they had collected audio before the judges arrived on site and that they would be questioned if necessary.

Burundian journalists denounce this behavior of harassing media professionals and demand that the law be respected to ensure a free and independent press in Burundi. A camerawoman and breastfeeding mother from Jimbere magazine had been detained in the cells of the Ngagara zone, in Bujumbura province.

According to local sources, these journalists were arrested by the Ntahangwa prosecutor's office while they were on their way to cover the resolution of a 21-year-old land dispute being heard by the Ntahangwa High Court, located north of Bujumbura, the economic capital of Burundi.

Ex2: *On March 20, 2026, in the commune of Kirundo, in the new province of Butanyerera, three people, including a merchant named Nsengiyumva and two village chiefs Cyriaque from the Rupfunda neighborhood and Elias Nkurunziza from the Bushaza neighborhood were all arrested at noon by the municipal police commissioner and loaded into his police pickup truck.*

This came after they had been summoned the previous day to appear at the municipal police station. Very early on Friday morning, all were taken to the police station under police guard who had been waiting for them at their respective homes.

Some sources on the ground report that they were taken to Bujumbura and are believed to be detained in the Documentation Department's cells.

So far, no reason has been given for these arrests. Their families are demanding that the truth be brought to light.



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II.2. SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

Economic, social, and cultural rights, referred to as second-generation rights, are set out in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Burundi ratified this covenant on March 14, 1990, and incorporated it into its 2018 Constitution, notably in Article 19. A particular feature of these rights is that they are often realized progressively, unlike civil and political rights. Signatory states, including Burundi, commit to guaranteeing the exercise of these rights according to their available resources.

II.2.1. DISRUPTION OF ECONOMIC LIFE.

Economic conditions in Burundi during the first quarter of 2026 were influenced by a series of significant events. In January, the closure of the Gatumba border led to a considerable increase in prices, for example for traditional cloth, the cost of which rose from 90,000 to over 200,000 francs. Traders, both Burundian and Congolese, expressed their dismay at the stagnation of their businesses and called for government intervention.

A fertilization campaign for tea plantations has begun, but difficulties related to the distribution and quality of fertilizers have led some producers to switch to food crops. The closure of an irrigation dam in Cibitoke has exacerbated the difficulties faced by rice farmers. Furthermore, civil servants in Burunga have not received their salaries for six months. Coffee producers in Matongo report a shortage of fertilizer and cite cases of corruption in the distribution of plant protection products, prompting other farmers to consider switching crops. In Kirundo, mandatory contributions imposed by the CNDD-FDD party are sparking growing discontent and acts of violence. In Bujumbura, a fire destroyed the stock of 35 merchants, resulting in substantial financial losses.

In February, the distribution of FOMI fertilizer in Bururi was suspended following protests by farmers. Although some farmers received their share, others in Matana have expressed dissatisfaction with local regulations governing the sale of maize. In March, the signing of contracts for the exploitation of nickel resources caused a stir in the mining sector, while a new 16% tax on gold sales is raising concerns. The fuel shortage is leading to abuses among motorcycle taxi drivers. On March 14, farmers in Mwaro organized a protest to demand chemical fertilizers. Delays in distribution are increasing the risk of famine, particularly following the suspension of urea fertilizer. Furthermore, in Ruyigi, a public health crisis poses an additional threat to local commerce. These events highlight the growing economic challenges facing Burundi in March 2026.

II.2.2. RIGHT TO EDUCATION

The right to education in Burundi was disrupted during the last quarter, as evidenced by the following situation: in January 2026, a crisis erupted, revealing violations of the principles of non-discrimination. On January 5, the start of the school year was chaotic in Gitega, due to a directive requiring the wearing of closed shoes, which led to a massive exclusion of students. As a result, classroom attendance dropped to less than a third, making teaching difficult. Teachers and students requested a revision of this directive, emphasizing the importance of taking into account families' financial resources. Growing discontent led to increased risks of dropping out. In Muramvya, checks were carried out regarding this measure, excluding those who did not comply with it.

II.2.2. RIGHT TO EDUCATION (the following of page 20)

Students from several schools, notably at ECOFO Biganda, did not re-enroll due to a lack of shoes. In Kayanza, a crisis was exacerbated by a shortage of school furniture. The situation was worrying, given that 60% of students had received poor results the previous term. In Burunga, ninth-grade teachers contested directives from the Provincial Director of Education, Elias Ndikumana, deemed illegal and disconnected from the realities on the ground. Furthermore, concerns emerged regarding students' nighttime participation in political activities. The education sector was going through a crisis worsened by the massive departure of teachers seeking better conditions abroad.

In February 2026, students continued to be involved in political activities. On the 13th, children were prevented from attending classes to welcome the First Lady at a sporting event, sparking outrage among parents and unions. Antoine Manuma of FENASB warned of the consequences of such interference on the quality of education. Students were transported to attend political rallies, creating a climate of fear among teachers. The heavy-handed management previously implemented led to alarming academic results, with nearly 500 teaching positions vacant. The exodus abroad has increased, as teachers seek better living conditions in neighboring countries. Allegations of corruption and resignations have exacerbated the situation. At the same time, internal scandals involving inappropriate behavior by certain principals have caused turmoil in several schools.

In March, the crisis worsened with the mysterious disappearance of the principal of a technical high school, Nestor Nsavyumukama. This event sparked serious concerns following the chaotic management of exams. Teachers demanded a reorganization of the assessments, threatening to contact the ministry if nothing was done. In a different development, the principal of another school ordered the students to support a sports team, causing concern among parents. Boycott movements also emerged, notably at Buhiga High School, where students expressed their dissatisfaction with what they considered abusive sanctions. These events illustrate the complexity of the educational situation in Burundi, combining political crisis and educational challenge.

II.2.3. RIGHT TO HEALTH

The right to health in Burundi was severely compromised from January to March 2026 due to various factors. In January, the province of Burunga faced a mosquito outbreak, with many residents lacking mosquito nets to prevent malaria during the rainy season. This exposed the population to an increased risk, as access to antimalarial drugs remained limited. Healthcare professionals are concerned for children and pregnant women, while rumors of mosquito nets being diverted to Tanzania have sparked protests demanding rapid distribution. Authorities acknowledge underserved areas and promise improvements, even as malaria cases rise.

The Iteka League reports that the National Police have not had access to care in specialized hospitals for a year, as they must pay a deposit for admission, causing discontent. In contrast, the General Staff ensures care for the military. A mysterious illness is affecting more than five hundred students in Gatara and Kayanza, with persistent flu-like symptoms. School officials are calling for rapid intervention by health services, citing the rapid spread of COVID-19.

II.2.3. RIGHT TO HEALTH (the following of page 21)

The municipality of Muyinga is suffering from a shortage of drinking water, especially in the Kibogoye neighborhood, and residents are demanding an end to the corruption that has caused these disruptions. Additionally, in Mwaro, young girls are reluctant to take iron supplements, despite concerns about iron deficiency. The Director of the Technical High School urges parents to encourage their daughters to complete this three-month treatment.

In February, Burundi faces a drug shortage and a resurgence of cholera cases in Nyanza, where the situation is deteriorating along the shores of Lake Tanganyika. Health facilities are struggling to treat cholera patients due to the lack of medication. The Nyanza-Lac center has been experiencing stockouts for over a year, complicating treatment. Several deaths have been reported, and the lack of medication is compromising the quality of care. Residents are expressing concern and calling for urgent action by the authorities to improve supplies and care conditions; otherwise, the spread of disease could increase significantly.



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III. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

During the period covered by this report, a persistent deterioration in human rights was observed in various parts of the country. This report highlights incidents involving violations of the right to life, physical integrity, and liberty, while also addressing economic, social, and cultural rights. It is important to note that, for this quarter, the Iteka League has observed actions taken by state agencies to address the various reported violations.

The Iteka League expresses its outrage at the impunity surrounding the criminal acts observed and makes the following recommendations:

To the Burundian authorities:

1. To guarantee respect for human rights, particularly the right to life, physical integrity, and liberty.
2. Take measures to end impunity for crimes and ensure that those responsible for human rights violations are held accountable for their actions.
3. Guarantee access to basic services, including water, health care, education, and justice, for all citizens.
4. Investigate and severely punish acts of violence against minors, which have become commonplace in Burundi under the supervision of local administrative officials.
5. Take measures to end impunity for crimes and ensure that perpetrators of human rights violations are held accountable for their actions.

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

1. Support the efforts of the Iteka League and other organizations dedicated to the defense of human rights in monitoring human rights violations in Burundi.
2. Use their influence to encourage Burundian authorities to respect human rights and put an end to impunity.

To human rights defense organizations:

1. Continue monitoring the human rights situation in Burundi and defend the protection of fundamental rights.
2. Prioritize joint work in the interest of effectiveness and efficiency for their diverse interventions.
3. Provide support to victims of human rights violations and work to ensure their access to justice.