



BURUNDIAN LEAGUE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS "ITEKA"

WEEKLY REPORT

"Iteka n' Ijambo"

Anyone should be respected

N°514 from 16 to 22 February 2026

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In memory of Madame Marie Claudette KWIZERA, treasurer of the Iteka League, missing since December 10, 2015. From December 2015 to February 22, 2026, at least 856 victims of forced disappearance have been documented by the Iteka League, at least 86 victims have reappeared, and 772 victims are still missing. The UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances (WGEID) has already communicated at least 252 victims to the government of Burundi.

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 of 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".
- ◆ The Iteka League is decentralized into 17 federations and 32 sections.

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ADMINISTRATIVE MAP OF BURUNDI

NEW ADMINISTRATIVE REDIVISION OF MARCH 16, 2023



ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AFC / M23: Alliance of the Congo River / March 23 Movement (Rebel coalition in DRC)

CNDD-FDD: National Council for the Defense of Democracy - Forces for the Defense of Democracy (Ruling party in Burundi)

CDS: Health Center

ECOFO: Fundamental School

FDN: National Defense Force (Burundi Army)

FARDC: Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo

FDLR: Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (Armed group based in DRC)

FOMI: Organo-Mineral Fertilizers of Industries

SNR: National Intelligence Service (Burundi)

TGI: High Court

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0. INTRODUCTION

This bulletin presents the human rights situation in Burundi during the week of February 16 to 22, 2026. In this report, the Iteka League also examines the political, security, judicial, and governance context. It also analyzes illustrative cases of violations of civil and political rights, economic, social, and cultural rights, as well as category-specific rights.

The human rights violations observed and documented by the Iteka League are as follows for this period: at least 15 people killed, including 13 bodies found and 2 cases of infanticide, 3 cases of abduction and/or people reported missing, as well as 5 journalists arbitrarily arrested.

Among the victims, 5 women and 2 girls were killed, 3 girls were abducted, 1 female journalist was arbitrarily arrested, and 3 children were killed.

Members of the ruling CNDD-FDD party Imbonerakure, SNR agents, police officers, and administrators are accused of being the main alleged perpetrators of these human rights violations

I. CONTEXT

I.1. POLITICAL CONTEXT

Difficulty of return for Congolese refugees from BUSUMA, in Ruyigi commune, Buhumuza province

Information received by the Iteka League on February 21, 2026, indicates that within the Busuma refugee camp, located in the commune of Ruyigi, Buhumuza province, some refugees express the desire to return to their country of origin. However, the administrative authorities are firmly opposed to this initiative, and some refugees are even considering returning to their country through clandestine means.

As an example, on February 18, 2026, ten Congolese refugees from the same camp were intercepted in the main town of the Ruyigi commune while they were on board a vehicle from a travel agency called "NIKONA," and were forced to return to the Busuma refugee camp. Uncertainty surrounds this

repatriation, as the refugees claim they want to return due to the return of peace in their places of origin in the Democratic Republic of Congo. While some opinions argue that in reality, they wish to join their compatriots on the battlefield. All these apprehended refugees were between 30 and 40 years old. It should be noted that since the Busuma site began hosting Congolese refugees in early December 2025, deaths have averaged dozens per day and more than seven hundred people have already perished due to poor living conditions at this site.

Analysis of a cross-border conflict and human rights violations in Burundi

Since December 10, 2025, South Kivu has been the scene of a tragedy, when the AFC/M23 took control of Uvira, leading to the departure of thousands of civilians who fled to Burundi. This massive migration was a response to unbearable violence. With increasing pressure from the international

community, particularly the United States, the AFC/M23 finally left the city in early 2026. This allowed the return of the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (FARDC) and the Wazalendo militias, but the situation remained precarious and unstable. Around 100,000 refugees, driven by

1.1. POLITICAL CONTEXT (the following of page 5)

the horror of the fighting, sought refuge in Burundi, where their arrival was not easy. They had to face inflation, a lack of humanitarian aid, and a cholera outbreak caused by the absence of drinking water. The report also highlights a worrying manipulation, where the Burundian authorities use the distress of these refugees to obtain international funds. At the same time, they hide members of the FDLR and the Imbonerakure among these vulnerable civilians.

In the highlands, the Banyamulenge community, for its part, was subjected to repeated acts of violence, such as rape, theft, and murder, perpetrated by the government coalition and its allies in a climate of ethnic discrimination. In addition, around 3,000 Burundian soldiers were deployed to secure

the mining sites in Misisi, benefiting influential figures and delivering a heavy blow to the morale of the forces engaged on the front.

Although some areas previously controlled by the AFC/M23 are now considered safe by residents, the situation in Uvira and Minembwe remains uncertain and volatile. Concerns are growing over a potential deployment of 20,000 men (FDN, FDLR, Imbonerakure) from Burundi to South Kivu, which could exacerbate already tense conflicts. In the face of this worrying situation, it is imperative to protect the Banyamulenge community to prevent a new genocide from occurring in this troubled region.

1.2. SECURITY CONTEXT

Insecurity caused by refugees in Ruyigi commune, Buhumuza province

On February 19, 2026, at the Busuma refugee camp, located in the commune of Ruyigi, province of Buhumuza, refugees expressed their discontent by throwing stones at Caritas staff responsible for distributing cash assistance. According to information gathered on site, the disturbance was caused by refugees not listed as beneficiaries. Due to this disorder, The security forces were forced to fire shots into the air in order to disperse the crowd. It should be noted that this is a recurring behavior within this Congolese

refugee camp, which opened at the beginning of December 2026. Indeed, this incident marks the fifth occurrence of such behavior during cash distributions. Furthermore, some opinions hypothesize that the camp is infiltrated by police officers and soldiers of the Congolese army, notably the Wazalendo and the FDLR, in light of their conduct.

A quarrel breaks out between the police and civilians in Mabanda, Nyanza commune, in Burunga province

Serious incidents occurred in Mabanda, in the commune of Nyanza, Burunga province, on February 18, 2026, around 3 p.m. Several explosions were heard, causing injuries among the police and acts of vandalism at the central market. According to witnesses, it all started with a police operation to seize motorcycles parked near the market. Plainclothes officers tried to take the motorcycles, which triggered a strong reaction from the motorcyclists. A fight broke out, creating a lot of chaos in the market. . Shortly after, a group of uniformed police officers

arrived, which led to gunfire. The bikers then threw stones at the police, going from the market to the police station, where the seized motorcycles were taken. On site, several police officers were injured, including Viko, the chief of police of Mabanda, who was reportedly seriously hurt. With the noise of the projectiles, a great panic spread through the market, causing many traders to flee with their goods.

Meanwhile, unidentified individuals looted numerous products. Some traders saw

1.2. SECURITY CONTEXT (the following of page 6)

thieves leave with their goods, while others remained powerless, watching their possessions disappear. The traders criticize this police operation in broad daylight, near a crowded market, and ask who is responsible for the incident, while demanding compensation for their losses. Motorcyclists say this stems from a problem from the previous week.

where an assistant to the police commissioner of Makamba reportedly forced access to the Mabanda motorcycle parking lot to take fuel, which led to a violent reaction from the motorcyclists, who also sold this fuel. This conflict worsened relations between the motorcyclists and the police in Mabanda. The operation on February 18th was reportedly led

by Viko, who was seriously injured during the clashes. The events took place while the communal police commissioner, Bikovu, had been absent for more than two months due to health reasons, and there are rumors of a serious illness, or even poisoning, because of tensions with merchants who accuse him of abuse during seizures of goods and vehicles. often in favor of the State. The residents of Mabanda, while waiting for news from the authorities, are worried. They are calling for a clear investigation to determine responsibilities and to prevent further problems in a region already marked by tensions between the police and traders.

Cases of theft have been reported in the Buhiga commune, in Karusi province

On the night of February 18, 2026, on the hill, in the Buhiga area and commune, Karusi province, just at the market of the Buhiga center, three kiosks were demolished at the same time and all the goods were stolen along with a large sum of money not yet known. All this happened while the Imbonerakure and

the police say they patrol throughout the night. The population is worried about these repeated thefts and thinks that these Imbonerakure might be the main perpetrators, but nothing can be said out loud as there is no evidence.

1.3. JUDICIAL CONTEXT

Three youths sentenced to life imprisonment for the rape and murder of a 16-year-old girl in Rumonge, Burunga province

On February 18, 2026, the Rumonge High Court delivered its verdict in the case of the rape and murder of a 16-year-old girl, committed on February 15, 2026, in the Mudende area of Rumonge commune, Burunga province.

The three people convicted of rape with murder are, among others: Emmanuel Mpawenayo, aged 21, Claude Niyonyishu, aged 23, and Juvent Nsengiyunva, aged 19, and they were sentenced to life imprisonment. According to sources on site, this verdict was made public after an in flagrante delicto trial before the same court. The court also ordered the perpetrators to pay a sum of 60,000,000 FBU in damages to the victim's family. They were found guilty of rape with murder of a 16-year-old girl named Estella Irankunda. The crimes were committed on Kirama Hill,

Mudende area, Rumonge commune, Burunga province, on the morning of February 15, 2026. One of the perpetrators was arrested that same day at 8 p.m., in the Mugomere neighborhood, in the city of Rumonge while attempting to flee, and it was he who denounced the other two co-perpetrators. Emmanuel Mpawenayo admitted to the acts, but the other two denied them. The public prosecutor requested a life sentence, and the civil party demanded 80,000,000 FBU in damages.

According to several testimonies, the victim had gone to collect firewood on the said hill when it fell into the hands of three young men. They raped her successively and killed her afterwards since she had recognized one of the three perpetrators named Emmanuel Mpawenayo. Two other little girls who were

I.3. JUDICIAL CONTEXT (the following of page7)

with the victim managed to escape. The public prosecutor had brought them to testify in court.

A journalist sentenced to 4 years in prison requested, a concern for press freedom in Burundi

The public prosecutor near the Ngozi Court of Appeal requested, on February 20, 2026, the confirmation of the sentence of four years in prison and a fine of 200,000 FBU against journalist Sandra Muhoza. She is being prosecuted for endangering state security, allegedly disseminating information to foreigners, and making statements considered to be of an ethnic nature.

Sentenced in the first instance by the Ngozi High Court, the journalist firmly contests the accusations. Her defense claims that confessions were allegedly obtained under

duress during a night interrogation at the national intelligence service in Bujumbura. Her lawyers are requesting her acquittal and immediate release.

This case is provoking strong reactions within public opinion. Several citizens and human rights defenders denounce what they consider an infringement on press freedom and the right to inform. They remind that journalists must be able to carry out their work without intimidation or judicial pressure.

I.4. GOVERNANCE CONTEXT

A catastrophic fuel management in Burundi

Despite efforts in digitalization and control, there has been catastrophic management of fuel in Burundi. Preliminary figures from the General State Inspectorate are alarming: 12 million liters of gasoline and 19 million liters of diesel are missing, according to President Evariste Ndayishimiye.

The latter accuses owners of luxury vehicles of being able to get fuel without any problem because they have stockpiled fuel, while others suffer from shortages, which is scandalous!

The implementation of an application to register fuel beneficiaries was a good idea, but it was not enough to prevent theft. It is time to take stricter measures to fight corruption and protect the country's resources.

The publication of the General Inspectorate's report is eagerly awaited, as well as the measures that will be taken to punish those responsible for these embezzlements.

Protests by the population of Biyorwa area, Butaganzwa commune, Buhumuza province

As of February 17, 2026, the distribution of FOMI fertilizers sparked strong outrage among the population of the Biyorwa area. While each farmer was supposed to receive one bag, many residents were deprived of them.

The anger of the constituents is fueled by suspicions of favoritism: the communal administrator's driver, named Nyandwi, allegedly received 21 bags, while the communal assistant accountant reportedly

obtained 16. These authorities do not own fields in this area. The population is concerned about the scale of this phenomenon: if these practices are repeated in the five zones of the commune, the administrator could accumulate more than 100 bags and the assistant accountant more than 80.

The residents fear that these inputs might be diverted to be illegally resold in Tanzania.

II. CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS

II.1. RIGHT TO LIFE

II.1.1. INTENTIONAL HOMICIDES

II.1.1.1. PEOPLE KILLED FOLLOWING SETTLEMENT OF SCORES

Two women killed and another injured in Muhanga commune, Butanyerera province

On the night of February 18 to 19, 2026, in Muhanga commune, Butanyera province, two women, including Béatrice Nijimbere, were killed in different ways.

According to sources on the ground, at around 9 p.m., a grenade attack bloodied the capital of the Gikomero zone, in Muhanga commune, Butanyerera province. The explosion that took the life of Beatrice Nijimbere occurred in her bar, located just opposite the administrative offices of the area.

The victim, wife of the head of the zone Gikomero. Gaspard Nsavyimana, died on the spot. Béatrice Nijimbere was a teacher and former director of ECOFO Gikomero, as well as a member of the Rango communal council for the CNDD-FDD party. The attack also injured one woman, Laëtitia, a nurse, who was hit by shrapnel from the explosive device.

According to the initial investigations, Béatrice Nijimbere was potentially not the initial target. The investigation is focusing on family land disputes. At this stage, the police have arrested two suspects: Godefroi Mbazumutima and Joseph Igirukwishaka.

According to the information collected, Joseph Girukwishaka, this man was at the pub at the time of the events and had allegedly already made threats against the victim, claiming that

she would be killed one day. It is reported that he had a child with the victim's daughter and had asked to marry her as a second wife, a request to which the mother had objected. He had also given a significant amount of money to this young girl, an amount that was reportedly used to facilitate her departure to Oman.

Our source added that the suspect was arrested while trying to flee. He confessed to being the perpetrator of this incident.

During the same night, a second woman died in the fire of her house. According to sources on site, an 83-year-old woman, stepmother to Nizigiyimana Annociate, a communal administrator in Muhanga, was killed by burning by unidentified persons while she was in her house. According to the same sources, internal conflicts between this administrative authority and other members of her party are behind this murderous act. The communal administrator, Annonciate Nizigiyimana, condemned these acts and called for calm, recalling that vigilantism has no place in a state governed by law.



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II.1.1.2.PERSONS KILLED BY UNIDENTIFIED PEOPLE OR BODIES FOUND DEAD

A lifeless body found in Mugina commune, Bujumbura province

The nineteenth day of February 2026 was fatal for Ciza, a man in his forties from Nyempundu, Nyamakarabo area, Mugina commune.

Under circumstances that the administration or the police have not clarified through an investigation, the victim Ciza was tortured before being killed. This assassination is said to have been planned a few days earlier and was carried out on Wednesday, February 18, 2026, when the victim was returning from Gikomero, a center on Nyempundu hill. Our sources specify that regarding this nth assassination in the border area, delinquent Imbonerakure, who are often involved in hunting down passers-by crossing the river to go to or come from Rwanda, are pointed out by the population as being the perpetrators of this assassination. They feared that the victim, who was accustomed to working in the fields near the Ruhwa river, do not reveal

them to the army or the police. They had been investigating for several days people involved in thefts, in the movement of gold and coffee to Rwanda and on this hill; only the Imbonerakure are known for such crimes, and the victim knew some of them.

In the context of tense relations following security conflicts in the region, and where Burundi and Rwanda are concerned, the population of Mugina, especially from the border areas with Rwanda, is asking the President of the Republic, recently appointed Chairperson of the African Union, to act for the reopening of the borders to jointly safeguard security between the DRC, Rwanda, and Burundi, as the passage of rebel groups, particularly the Interahamwe of the FDLR, and the presence of fraudulent traffickers have always spread fear and caused victims in these areas.

Four lifeless bodies of two women, a girl and a man found in Nyanza commune, Burunga province

On the night of February 18 to 19, 2026, on Mugumure Hill, Mukubano area in Nyanza commune, Burunga province, three people were found dead. Ezéchiel Nzeyimana, in his sixties with 10 children, is the main suspect, head of the family and husband of one of the victims, and he has fled.

The victims were identified as follows: Onorathe Ntunzwenimana, 44 years old, the suspect's wife; Yollande Ninteretse, 55 years old, a family acquaintance; Editha Ntakiyanira, 3 and a half years old, the suspect's daughter.

The bodies were discovered early in the morning under particularly atrocious circumstances. According to local authorities, the suspect, Ezéchiel Nzeyimana, is believed to have acted deliberately. He left the scene after the incident, taking several personal

belongings, which supports the theory of an organized flight.

Persistent family conflicts would be at the origin of this act. Law enforcement launched active search operations to apprehend the individual.

Subsequently, the Iteka League received information indicating that the lifeless body of this presumed perpetrator of this tragedy was found on February 21, 2026, hanging from a palm tree on Mutuntu hill, Kabonga area, Nyanza commune, in Burunga province, and his lifeless body was taken to the morgue of the Hospital in Nyanza lac. Some say that he committed suicide, while others suspect that he may have been killed by unidentified people.

These acts revive concerns about the resurgence of domestic violence and serious crimes in Burunga province.

II.1. RIGHT TO LIFE (the following of page 10)

A lifeless body of a young woman found in the commune and province of Gitega

As of February 20, 2026, on Buhinda hill, Gitega commune and province, near the Nyakijanda river, the lifeless body of Jeanine Nkunuzimana, 25 years old, was found.

According to sources on site, Jeanine Nkunuzimana had been missing since February 15, 2026.

This information is confirmed by the hill chief, Gérard Minani. According to him, the deceased's body was in an advanced state of decomposition at the time of its discovery. The

exact circumstances of her death are not yet known.

Still according to this hill chief, the young woman suffered from a mental illness, but this is categorically denied by the surrounding population.

It should be noted that after the constat by the O.P. J, the deceased was buried the same day very close to the Nyakijanda river.

A lifeless body of a girl found in Rumonge commune, Burunga province

On February 15, 2026, on Kirama hill, in the Mudende area, Rumonge commune, in the province of Burunga. Estella Iradukunda, 15, was found lifeless in circumstances related to serious violence. According to local sources, initial findings indicate that she was raped before being strangled and the alleged perpetrators are Claude Nyishuyimana, Nsengiyumva Juvan and Mpawenayo Emmanuel. The first information after a medical assessment on the spot indicates that the child was raped before being strangled. Until 9 a.m. on February 16, 2026, the victim's body was strewn on the ground. The administrative, health and security services went to the site for the usual checks. These three people suspected of involvement have been arrested, according to the information

gathered on site. Beyond the facts, this tragedy raises the urgent question of child protection, particularly for young girls exposed to various forms of violence. Local authorities are calling on parents and the community to strengthen vigilance and supervision of children, especially when they go to isolated places. The population is demanding that justice do its work so that the rights of children are respected and protected in accordance with the laws in force. This situation highlights the need for collective mobilization by authorities, families, and civil society to ensure a safe environment for all children. .

A lifeless body found in Karambi, commune and province of Gitega

Information received by the Iteka League on February 16, 2026, indicates that on January 12, 2026, a lifeless body of a man was found in his room on Karambi hill, Gitega commune and province. The victim is known as Nestor Nduwimana, born in 1979, the son of Gashatsi Mathieux and Mvuyekure Rusarie. It was around 10 a.m. that the neighbors noticed that he had died and that the body was already decomposing, especially on the face.

According to these neighbors, the last time they saw him was on the evening of January 9, 2026, and they suspect that he was killed by unidentified people.

According to the police, no visible injuries were found on the body. The administration, in agreement with the family of the deceased, decided to proceed with his burial on Karambi Hill.



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II.1. RIGHT TO LIFE (the following of page 11)

A lifeless body found in the waters of the Ruvyironza River, Gishubi commune, in Gitega province

Information received by the Iteka League on February 16, 2026, indicates that on January 9, 2026, around noon, a lifeless body was found in the waters of the Ruvyironza River, which separates Gikuka hill from the Gishubi and Bubaji areas of the former Buraza commune, Gishubi commune, Gitega province.

According to police sources, the victim's name is Harimeshi Elias, 46 years old, son of Biyandaza Pasacal and Girukwigomba Natalie, from Gikuka hill.

According to the victim's wife, the deceased had been missing since the evening of January 4, 2026. According to the police, on

the lifeless body, a rope was found caught around the throat, and near the body, a bag containing stones was seen. The lifeless body was already decomposed with blood flowing from his mouth. His wife stated that her husband had good relations with those around him.

As the lifeless body was already decomposed, after the observation of the Judicial Police officer, the victim's family and the authorities proceeded with the burial of the deceased near the aforementioned river. The police indicated that in-depth investigations have already begun.

A lifeless body of a child found on Gihamagara hill, Buhinda area, Gitega commune and province

Information received by the Iteka League on February 17, 2026 indicates that as of January 03, 2026, at around 5 p.m., a lifeless body of a child was stuck in a window on Gihamagara Hill Buhinda commune and Gitega province.

According to the police's report, the child was strangled by his own clothing as he tried to get through the window.

It was this window that snagged the t-shirt he was wearing, preventing it from reaching the ground, which caused him to be strangled.

The deceased child is called Ishakishaka Edgar, son of Misago Simeon and Pascaline Nahimana, 13 years old, 5th grade student at ECOFO Gihamagara and he was accompanied by another child named Akimana Bruce aged 11, who locked him inside. It was then that while trying to get out, he tried to go through the window and then his clothing got stuck on it and strangled him.

The family decided to evacuate the deceased to the morgue of the Itaba communal hospital while waiting for the funeral.

A lifeless body found in front of the Le Carrefour hotel, in Kayanza, in Butanyerera province

At dawn on February 21, 2026, in front of the Le Carrefour hotel, in the town of Kayanza, in the province of Butanyerera, the lifeless body of a 40-year-old man was found. The victim, a bicycle taxi driver by profession, was found in front of the establishment's fence under still unclear circumstances.

According to close sources, the victim had lent his bicycle to a friend the day before to transport goods and had not been heard from since. His family and local residents suspect a homicide, believing that the body may have been abandoned at the scene to cover up a

crime. They are calling for a thorough investigation to shed full light on the matter.

For his part, the communal administrator, Godefroid Niyonizigiye, calls for caution. An initial hypothesis suggests an accidental fall while the victim may have attempted to climb the fence while intoxicated, a version rejected by the family. A hotel night watchman has been questioned and taken into custody for the purposes of the investigation. The authorities assure that investigations are ongoing to determine the exact causes of this troubling death.

II.1.2. ABDUCTION AND/OR FORCED DISAPPEARANCE

A missing person in the Muha commune, Bujumbura province

Information received by the Iteka League on February 20, 2026, indicates that Jean Claude Niyomwungere, aged 39 and residing in the Musaga area, Mugere commune, Bujumbura province, has been missing since January 26, 2026. According to information provided by his parents, Jeanne Nahayo and André Ndayizeye, Jean Claude had gone, as usual, to his workplace located in the city center, at the

headquarters of the organization FHI 360. He has not returned home since that date. His family and close ones are deeply concerned for his physical integrity and safety. They are making an appeal for any information that could help locate him.

A little girl disappeared in the Musongati commune, Burunga province

There is intense concern on Mutwana hill, in the Butezi area, Musongati commune, in Burunga province, following the disappearance of an 8-year-old girl. She is Sarah Shurweryimana, a second-year student at ECOFO Mutwana.

The child, whose mother suffers from mental health issues, was being raised by her maternal grandparents, Kabura Angèle and Birabona Salvator. According to the family, the girl was last seen on February 11, 2026, leaving school. She never returned home and has remained missing since. Residents of the hill specifically accuse the chief of Mutwana hill, Vincent Nemerimana, of being involved in this disappearance. Some claim to have seen him taking the child on a motorcycle on the day of the incident. A young boy, said to be the girl's brother, is reported to have witnessed the scene but has not yet been interviewed by the police, according to relatives.

On 14 February, Vincent Nemerimana was summoned to the Giharo police station at around 1 p.m., before being released the same day. The family deplors this release while the child remains nowhere to be found. The grandparents say they have referred the matter to the administrative authorities as well as to the FVS AMADE organization, which is committed to defending children's rights. They say that no significant progress has been made so far.

In addition, local sources speak of extremely serious accusations in this border area with Tanzania. Some people from Tanzania were reportedly extorted and then executed before being thrown into the waters of the Maragarazi River. The Mutwana Hill Chiefs, Vincent Nemerimana and his colleague from Kibimba Hill, Zacharie Barutwanayo, They are cited as gang leaders who lay ambushes for these Burundians. At this stage, no investigation has been opened by either the administrative authorities, the police, or the Rutana prosecutor's office, despite several locally reported suspicions.

The hills in question, being located on the Tanzanian border, constitute a passage frequented by many Burundians returning from Tanzania in search of seasonal work. This reality heightens the concern of residents, who are calling for thorough investigations. Sarah's family fears that the child may have been taken to Tanzania and makes an urgent appeal to the authorities to intensify the search so that she can be found safe and sound and return to school. To date, no official communication has been made regarding the progress of the investigation into the girl's disappearance or concerning the allegations mentioned by local sources.



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II.1.2. ABDUCTION AND/OR FORCED DISAPPEARANCE (the following of page13)

Disappearance of a student in Rutana commune, Burunga province

Since February 16, 2026, on the hill, zone and commune of Rutana, province of Burunga, Nadia, an 18-year-old student living in the Birongozi neighborhood and studying management computer science at the Rutana Multidisciplinary Communal High School, has disappeared.

According to information gathered from her family, Nadia woke up that morning and got ready very early to go to school. In the

afternoon, the family waited for her to return from school but in vain. Her family has raised the alarm, but there has been no news of her so far. Some sources indicate that Nadia had no illness related to mental deficiency or mental alienation, while others say that in recent days, she often wandered with men having Muslim practices and beliefs. Their parents ask anyone who sees her to report it.

II.2. PHYSICAL AND/OR MENTAL INTEGRITY.

II.2.1. TORTURE, CRUEL, INHUMAN OR DEGRADING PUNISHMENTS OR TREATMENT

A man was beaten Ruyigi Commune, Buhumuza Province

On the night of February 21, 2026, in the Sanzu III neighborhood of the Ruyigi commune, in the Buhumuza province, Clovis Kwizera from the same neighborhood was beaten by young Imbonerakure, including Isaïe Nsengiyumva, head of the Imbonerakure in the Sanzu neighborhood, Jimmy, Eliudi, and Claude, accusing him of having exceeded the closing hours of his kiosk.

Clovis Kwizera is currently hospitalized at the Ruyigi Hospital in room number 12 of the internal medicine department. Among them, none have been arrested so far, and the population of the Sanzu neighborhood is asking that justice be done, especially since this is not the first time these Imbonerakure have been involved in such misconduct.

A man was beaten in Buhiga commune, Gitega Province

On February 16, 2026, around 7 p.m., on Nyagoba Hill, Bugenyuzi area of Karusi commune, in a bar owned by a woman named Euzeubie, two Imbonerakure, Ndayisenga, 41, and Bucumi, over 30 years old, beat a man named Pascal, a member of the CNDD-FDD party, over 55 years old, accusing him of

urinating in front of the bar while intoxicated. According to witnesses, they hit him on the right arm.

A source on site indicates that the perpetrators remain free while the victim is on a bed at Buhiga Hospital.

II.2.2. RIGHT TO FREEDOM

II.2.2.1. ARBITRARY ARRESTS

Five journalists arrested in Ntakangwa commune, Bujumbura province

Since February 18, 2026, two journalists known as Olivier Manirambona and Aline Niyonizigiye, a camerawoman and nursing mother, from the magazine Jimbere, have been held in the dungeons of the Ngagara area, in Bujumbura province. According to sources on the ground, these journalists were arrested by the Ntakangwa prosecutor's office

while they were going to follow the enforcement of a 21-year-old land dispute, entrusted to the Ntakangwa High Court, located in the north of the city of Bujumbura, the economic capital of Burundi. The two journalists were held together with one of the parties to the conflict, Siméon Ngenzebuhoro, a former member of parliament. On Thursday,

II.2.2. RIGHT TO FREEDOM (the following of page 14)

February 19, 2026, the three detainees appeared at a flagrante delicto hearing, which was postponed to this 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.

A Jimbere official, along with other media professionals in Burundi, denounced this arbitrary arrest, pointing out that its journalists had violated 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 for Equality, Crisis Preparedness and Management. Detained within the premises of the Burundian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, they were taken to the SNR cells before being released around 9 p.m. These independent journalists are: Nitanga Tchandrou, Papy Amani, and their driver.

On February 20, 2026, the two journalists from Jimbere magazine were also released on a provisional release bond by the prosecutor at the Court of Appeal of Ntahangwa, Eraste Ndayiragije; he noted that they collected recordings before the judges arrived on site and that they would be detained if necessary. Burundian journalists denounce this behavior of harassing media professionals and demand that the law be respected in order to guarantee a free and independent press in Burundi.



Anyone should be respected

III. SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

III.1. DISRUPTION OF ECONOMIC LIFE

The outbreak of nodular dermatitis and foot-and-mouth disease threatens the cows in Vyuya, Mugamba, and Rutovu communes, in Burunga province

Twenty-two cows have already died in the Vyuya area in Mugamba of the Matana commune, Burunga province, due to NODULAR DERMATOSIS and FOOT-AND-MOUTH DISEASE, while more than thirty are still suffering from these diseases reported in this commune for 3 months, according to the head of this area, Elvis Nduwayezu, who says that the livestock owners are trying to put their cows under symptomatic treatment, but some end up dying.

This comes at a time when Parfait Niyonizigiye, head of the Kajondi area in Rutovu of the Bururi commune, reports 5 cattle dead out of more than 60 affected by these viral diseases, which are also reported in other areas such as Bururi, Munini, Bamba Rutovu, Muhweza, and Condi in the Bururi commune, as well as in the Matana and Kiryama areas in the Matana commune.

According to the farmers who are already lamenting the decrease in milk production in affected cows. Among these diseases, the deadliest is NODULAR DERMATOSIS, which manifests with high fever and the appearance of firm nodules on the skin, compared to

foot-and-mouth disease characterized by excessive salivation, the appearance of painful blisters in the mouth, fever, and others, according to these farmers, some of whom do not understand why the general livestock management turns a deaf ear while they are recording huge losses.

They are asking the government to consider making vaccines against these highly contagious diseases and their curative treatment available, and to take other measures aimed at reducing their spread, as their economic life is falling into ruin. Clément Nkeshimana, head of the Livestock Department in Bururi commune, and Damien Ngendakuriyo, head of the communal department of environment, agriculture, and livestock in Matana, did not want to provide us with all the figures of sick and dead cows but stated that they have already transmitted them to the provincial livestock office and to the general livestock management, while acknowledging the presence of these diseases.

III.2. RIGHT TO EDUCATION

Massive departures of teachers weaken the Burundian educational system.

Since 2020, all sectors of life have experienced a severe regression, especially under the mandate of Evariste NDAYISHIMIYE, and education continues in 2026 to suffer from increased poor governance, which negatively affects its quality, resulting in low performance and graduates of very low levels that Burundi has never known since 1962. First, the first term of the 2025-2026 school year was affected by the appointments of several teachers to new administrative positions at the communal level. Except for the communes that host the capitals of the former provinces (Rugombo, Bubanza, Isare, and the Bujumbura municipality), which experienced

fewer teachers promoted to communal positions because the posts in these communes were held by those who were in the former provincial administration. Estimates indicate at least 500 vacant positions in school establishments at the provincial level, with 50-60 teachers per commune; Mugina, Bukinanyana, and Mpanda as examples. Then, education was affected by a wave of teacher departures, who deserted due to fleeing miserable salaries abroad in search of a better life. These had started a little earlier, but their rate was not alarming. Many were going to Kenya, Zambia, and Uganda. In the

III.2. RIGHT TO EDUCATION (the following of page 16)

manner of a catastrophe, with the new route to the United Arab Emirates and the Gulf countries, several teachers, disappointed by unmet expectations and promises of the new administration after the 2025 elections, Numerous departures have been reported, and the single province of Bujumbura experienced more than 150 departures between September and December 2025. With January 2026, these departures continued despite the authorities' prohibition for school officials to communicate these figures to the public, the void and lack caused by these departures making it so that they do not remain secret, and in the single area of Rugajo, 5 teachers left in just two months;

January and February 2026.

Our sources in the Bukinanyana, Cibitoke, and Mugina communes report an imminent departure of around one hundred teachers who are waiting for their travel documents to be ready.

Finally, as the State continues to show that it does not give any importance to a good education, February 2026 will conclude with the establishment across the country of new bodies, mostly consisting of advisers in the communal departments, and education still seems to be the only source of public officials that the State favors in these new positions. Not to mention the departures abroad and transfers to other departments, the education department alone will find itself, by March 2026, lacking 13 officials per commune, all exclusively teachers, totaling 546 nationwide.



Anyone should be respected

III.2. RIGHT TO EDUCATION (the following of page 17)

Allegations of serious misconduct and school fraud at Ruziba High School, Mugere commune, Bujumbura province

The principal of Ruziba High School, Charles Munezero, as well as the discipline prefect, Audifax Nkengurutse, a French teacher at this institution located in the Ruziba area, Mugere commune, Bujumbura province, are implicated in a case of morals and corruption. According to information gathered on site, these officials allegedly gave the first-term exam papers to two students of the 3rd Languages section, J.L. G. I. and C. B. T., after having sexual relations with them. The December French and English exams were reportedly provided to them in advance.

The case was made public following complaints from other students, intrigued by the unusually high grades of their classmates, whose usual academic level did not justify such performances. Internal investigations conducted by the teaching staff supposedly confirmed the existence of inappropriate relationships between the administration and these students. The principal was arrested by the police on the morning of February 19, 2026, at his workplace.

Abuse of power by a teacher in Karusi commune in Gitega province

As of February 17, 2026, on Nyarutovu hill, Gitaramuka area of Karusi commune, at ECOFO Nyarutovu, during the network test administration, a 6th grade teacher named Sylvestre Kanyeshamba fled after a scandal that occurred in his class.

According to sources on site, on February 16, 2026, in the afternoon, he invited 20 students from his class and asked them to help him plant beans, and they did so. Around 6 p.m., he rewarded them by showing them the answers for the next day's test. On the morning of Tuesday, the supervisor noticed cases of cheating with cheat sheets held by

several students in a class of 20 students. After catching 5 boys, the remaining 15 ran out. The secret was revealed when some students told the truth.

Since it is customary to rotate teachers on the day of the test, each teacher does not supervise their own class. The teacher in question received information about what was happening in his class, and that is how he disappeared directly to an unknown place until this day.

Lack of student desks in the Makamba area, in the Gitega province

A shortage of desks and benches is noticeable in certain classes of the Makamba Primary School located in the Makamba area of the Mwaro commune, which is currently in Gitega province. This problem of lacking desks and benches is particularly noticeable from the 1st year to the 5th year at this school. In these classes, the students attend lessons sitting on planks placed on stakes driven into the ground. To write in their notebooks, they

place them on another plank located in front of each group, which is elevated compared to the plank on which they sit.

Apart from the fact that this position is uncomfortable for learning, taking notes in the notebooks placed on the higher plank is also not easy.

III.3. RIGHT TO HEALTH

Shortage of medicines and worrying increase in cholera cases in the Nyanza commune, in Burunga province.

The Busiga hospital, which receives more patients per day, has four nurses and only one doctor, whereas last year this healthcare facility had 21 nurses, two doctors, and support staff. According to the hospital employees, the medical director took a plane

three weeks ago. Patients and employees interviewed by our source on February 20, 2026, say that if nothing is done, activities will be paralyzed.

Disease not yet identified in Kirundo commune, Butanyerera province

From the week of February 16 to 22, 2026, the commune of Kirundo experienced an as-yet unidentified disease that presents symptoms similar to those of COVID-19. According to local witnesses, the main symptoms are: fever, cough, and flu. This disease weakens people and is contagious. The absenteeism rate in classrooms even reaches 60%, and as of February 18, 2026, some schools did not open their doors due to

massive absences. For example, Bushaza School in the Bushaza area and ECOFO Kigina in the Kigina area and Kirundo commune did not open that day. Due to the lack of medicines in public health centers, patients are suffering and activities are disrupted in all sectors of life.



Anyone should be respected

IV. CATÉGORICAL RIGHTS

IV. 1. RIGHT TO PROTECTION OF THE CHILD AGAINST VIOLENCE AND ABUSE

Child abuse in the locality of Kinyinya, Ntakangwa commune, Bujumbura province

On February 3, 2026, in the locality of Kinyinya, Ntakangwa commune, Bujumbura province, a six-year-old child was burned on his right hand by his mother.

The child, named Liévin, lives alone with his mother, Francine. According to the information gathered, the latter burned his hand with embers as punishment, accusing him of having stolen meat from the pot.

When questioned about the facts, the mother denied any intentionality and claimed that the child had accidentally fallen into the fire. However, neighbors contradict this version, confirming that she deliberately inflicted this injury on him.

Medically treated, the child's health gradually improves.

IV.2. INFANTICIDE

A 5 to 6 month fetus aborted on Jenda Hill, Bugendana commune, in Gitega province

Information received by the Iteka League on February 17, 2026 indicates that on January 15, 2026, at around 3 p.m., a woman named Francine Ininahazwe, 25 years old, from Ntunda sub-hill, Jenda hill, Bugendana commune, Gitega province was arrested, accused of the abortion of a 5 to 6-month-old fetus.

According to sources on the spot, this fetus was found in a hole under the bananas not far from the home of the alleged author, a widow of two children.

The alleged perpetrator is in police custody for in-depth investigations.

A newborn killed by his mother in Mahonda, Mahonda area, Gishubi commune, Gitega province

As of February 19, 2026, the Iteka League received information stating that on January 4, 2026, at 8 o'clock in the morning, a young woman named Ndayishimiye Jeanne, 21 years old, daughter of Sinzumusi Gérard and Nahimana Goreth, residing in the Umutumba Mahonda area, Gishubi commune, in Gitega province, is accused of giving birth and then killing her newborn child who is in good health. According to the same information, she was arrested at the hospital where she

had gone for treatment after committing the crime. It is specified that the perpetrator was arrested in the company of her sister, Ndayikeza Yvette, 17 years old, who helped her commit the crime. They had agreed to take and abandon the child in the village of Ntunda, in the Gicumbi forest, on December 27, 2025, but the child's body has not been found. A judicial file for these two young girls has been opened.



V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Iteka League firmly denounces the persistent deterioration of human rights in Burundi and condemns the impunity of the perpetrators of crimes. It calls on the Burundian authorities to take all possible measures and recommends the following:

To the Government of Burundi:

1. To ensure respect for human rights, including the right to life, physical integrity, and freedom.
2. To investigate the phenomena of bodies found in various locations across the country with no action undertaken by the government,
3. To take measures to end the impunity of crimes and ensure that those responsible for human rights violations are held accountable for their actions.
4. To ensure that interrogations conducted by the SNR comply with international standards, formally prohibiting nighttime interrogations and coerced confessions.
5. Strengthen border surveillance to prevent the illegal export of state-subsidized agricultural inputs.
6. Improve access to water and healthcare (cholera prevention) for refugees from South Kivu and stop any political exploitation of their presence.

To the technical and financial partners of the government of Burundi, including the UN, EU, and accredited diplomatic missions in Burundi:

1. To support the efforts of the Iteka League and other human rights organizations in monitoring human rights violations in Burundi.
2. To use their influence to compel Burundian authorities to respect human rights and end impunity.