



LIGUE BURUNDAISE DES DROITS DE L'HOMME

"ITEKA" association sans but lucratif

Agréée par l'ordonnance ministérielle n°530/0273 du 10 novembre 1994 revoyant l'ordonnance 550/029 du 6 février 1991

Membre affilié de la Fédération Internationale des Ligues des Droits de l'Homme (F.I.D.H)

LBDH/016/2026

Kampala, June 26, 2026

STATEMENT

On the occasion of the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, the League warns of **the alarming situation regarding the use of torture in Burundi.**

On this day, when the entire world is observing the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, the Burundian Human Rights League ITEKA draws attention to the persistence and indeed the increase in the use of both physical and psychological torture in detention centers and, above all, in Burundi's prisons, **where the already severe overcrowding has risen by 37 percentage points (37%) in a single year.**

In its weekly bulletins, as well as in all its other periodic reports, the ITEKA League documents cases of torture it has identified. However, the figures pertain only to victims of physical violence committed in public. However, the League knows that not only is physical torture systematic in police holding cells and those of the National Investigation Service—where many people even lose their lives but psychological torture is also widespread there.

The League takes this opportunity to note and strongly condemn prison overcrowding, which, far from decreasing, has seen a significant increase over the past twelve months. Between June 2025 and May 2026, the number of prisoners rose from 11,368 to 12,980 in the country's 13 known prisons. Consequently, overcrowding rose from 264.74 percent to 302.5 percent.

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	Prisons	Capacity	PRISON SITUATION JUNE 2025				SITUATION CARCERALE MAI 2026				Rate changes over a year
			Prison population	Number of defendants	Number of Convicted	Occupancy Rate	Prison population	Number of defendants	Number of Convicted	Occupancy Rate	
1	BUBANZA	200	350	140	210	175.00%	434	214	220	217.00%	42.00%
2	BURURI	250	280	175	105	112.00%	305	162	143	122.00%	10.00%
3	GITEGA	400	1200	479	721	300.00%	1456	690	766	364.00%	64.00%
4	MPIMBA	800	3855	2203	1652	481.88%	4230	2657	1573	528.75%	46.87%
5	MURAMVYA	100	791	371	420	791.00%	1063	428	635	1063.00%	272.00%
6	MUYINGA	300	512	129	383	170.67%	606	118	488	202.00%	31.33%
7	NGOZI F	250	172	74	98	68.80%	199	77	122	79.60%	10.80%
	NGOZI H	400	1590	577	1013	397.50%	1841	699	1142	460.25%	62.75%
9	RUMONGE	800	1384	493	891	173.00%	1471	525	946	183.88%	10.88%
10	RUTANA	350	399	188	211	114.00%	448	160	288	128.00%	14.00%
11	RUYIGI	300	678	316	362	226.00%	780	333	447	260.00%	34.00%
12	CMCL RUYIGI	72	57	22	35	79.17%	50	11	39	69.44%	-9.73%
13	CMCL RUMONGE	72	100	48	52	138.89%	97	19	78	134.72%	-4.17%
	TOTAL	4294	11368	5215	6053	264.74%	12980	6063	6887	302.28%	37.54%

This prison overcrowding creates inhuman living conditions in prisons, where people are practically crammed on top of one another, regularly lack food, are denied access to health care, and are even prematurely removed from health facilities and returned to prison before they have fully recovered; they are kept in prison long after their sentences have ended or despite having received presidential pardons.



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Facing this situation, the ITEKA League makes the following recommendations:

To the President of the Republic of Burundi:

- Ensure the effective and full implementation of previous presidential pardons;
- Ensure the release of all prisoners who have completed their sentences;
- Grant presidential pardons and sentence reductions more regularly to convicted prisoners who meet the eligibility criteria.

To the Minister of Justice, Human Rights, and Gender, and the Minister of the Interior, Community Development, and Public Security:

- Protect the courts from interference by the executive branch and powerful figures in the administration of justice;
- Fight against corruption in the judicial system at all levels;
- Take and propose to the government and the Judicial Council all necessary measures to limit and prevent prison overcrowding.

To the Independent National Human Rights Commission:

- Break out of its inaction to denounce prison overcrowding;
- Conduct regular visits to all detention centers and prisons, as required by the law establishing the commission, with a view, in particular, to gathering all information on the torture taking place there and to formulating to the government aimed at effectively prohibiting these crimes against humanity and reducing prison overcrowding;
- Produce annual reports, as required by the law that established it, to raise awareness of the



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situation and improve respect for the rights of those arrested and/or imprisoned;

- Collaborate with human rights organizations rather than opposing them.

To the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) and the United Nations Committee Against Torture:

- Visit prisons in Burundi and continue to closely monitor the situation of detainees in that country, with a view to making recommendations for their release or for their treatment in accordance with international standards.

To the Human Rights Council, GANRHI, and the Accreditation Subcommittee:

- Reassess the status of Burundi's Independent National Human Rights Commission (CNIDH).

To Burundi's technical and financial partners:

- Strengthen support for organizations working to eliminate torture and ensure respect for the rights of many prisoners and other victims of torture in Burundi.

On behalf of the Iteka League



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